

# MCV

## The Market for Home Computing & Video Games



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## Can we impress Tokyo Joe?

Trade show test for Sega's Dreamcast, whilst Sony unveils Ridge Racer 4 and PlayStation plug-in

ALL EYES switch to Japan next weekend, as Sega unveils Dreamcast and Sony previews its new portable gimmick.

The bi-annual Tokyo Game Show makes its autumn appearance from Friday October 9th. The first day is industry-only, followed by two hugely popular consumer days. Last spring's event attracted some 250,000 visitors, and the reaction of the crowds can make or break a product.

Sega will demonstrate its new Dreamcast console for the first time since the private viewings and content-free presentations at E3 in Atlanta five months ago. A good reception is crucial.

As always in this scenario, rumours abound of a hardware manufacturer struggling to have enough to show that is in a truly advanced state - whilst some suggest that launch of the



Manufacturers must impress Tokyo trade and public

hardware in Japan could still slip past the November 27th D-Day.

Sega scoffs at such talk. The new Sonic Adventure will definitely make an appearance, as will Incoming from Britsoft outfit Rage. A peek at new adaptations of the Virtua Fighter and Sega Rally brands is also expected.

Whatever the local response, Sega is also using the Tokyo event to nurture software support from international developers and publishers - with a series of private meetings starting as the European bigwigs hit town on Tuesday.

Sony, of course, will look to steal Sega's thunder. This won't be done by any official comment on a new console of its own, but by the unveiling of rip-roaring new PlayStation products such as Namco's Ridge Racer 4 and Square's Final Fantasy VIII.

Sony will also finally give a proper brand name to its Personal Digital Assistant, which is being launched into Japan at a price equivalent to \$30 in December.

Indeed, one of the first PlayStation games supporting the unit, which can be used in tandem with the base console or separately, will be Final Fantasy VIII.

## ChartTrack opens the way for GfK

SECRET MERGER talks have been held between ChartTrack and research giant GfK.

It is understood, however, that any possible buy-out of the company has now been put on the back-burner whilst the pair get to know each other. The first joint project is likely to be some kind of pan-European market report.

ChartTrack is widely regarded as the world's best supplier of weekly and monthly consumer software retail data, but it is UK-only.

Formed via an MBO from Gallup in late '95, ChartTrack has seven staff and a turnover of £500,000. It is 50 per cent owned by the staff, with UK games trade body ELSPA and Irish music body IRMA owning 25 per cent each.

GfK already provides industry research in Germany and France.

It is understood that whatever tie-up ChartTrack settles upon, it will seek approval from ELSPA.

## Distributor faces chop

Pinnacle and Centresoft to fight it out for Hasbro/Prose business

CAREER OPPORTUNITIES may be plentiful for the lucky MicroProse staff being welcomed into the Hasbro fold - but there's only room for one distributor.

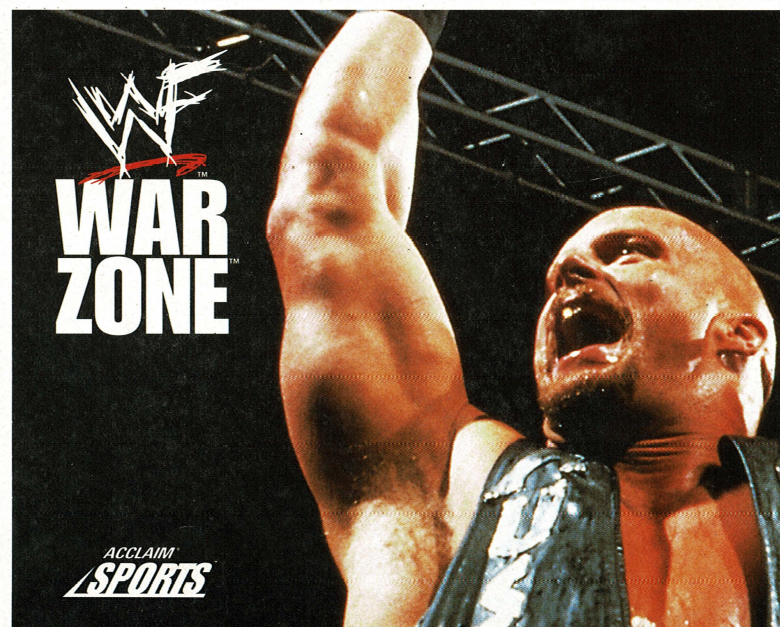
A duel to the death between Pinnacle, which began the industry shift towards exclusives when it won the MicroProse account in January 1995, and Hasbro's sole partner Centresoft will be fought out between now and January

Barry Jafrato, new global role boss of business development, said last week that there are breaks in

both contracts and "in the spirit of consolidation, we will go with one preferred distributor".

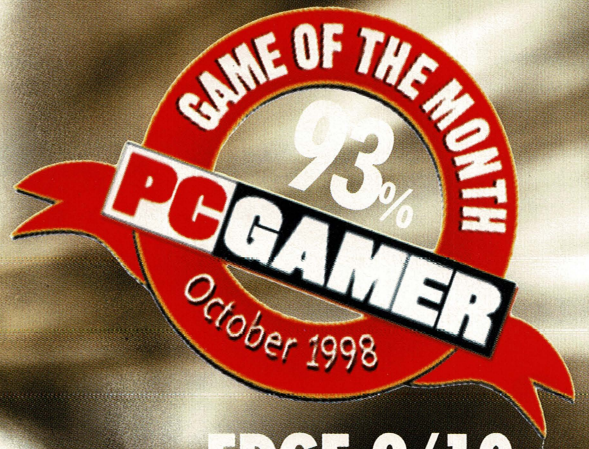
Around 60 MicroProse staff were shown around Hasbro's Stockley Park HQ last week as the toy giant sought to give those who are likely to stay with the group an insight into the parent company.

UK redundancies will be kept low as Hasbro moves its software operation into a new West London home and the former Prose Euro HQ in Chipping Sodbury becomes development-only.





# In '67 Legends were born...



**EDGE 9/10**

**ULTIMATE PC 90+%**

**PC ZONE 90%**

**PCGW ★★★★★**  
(HIGHLY RECOMMENDED)

*...in '98 they're back for another season.*

## Grand Prix Legends



**STREET DATE: OCTOBER 9TH**

**"Retro racing, rubber-burning mayhem.  
Your knuckles will turn white with fear!"**

**"The finest racing game since GP2!"**

**"Papyrus... have created what many will say is the finest racing game ever"**

*PC Gamer*

**"Manages to mix terrific visuals with outstanding realistic dynamics, resulting in one of the most  
rewarding car related PC experiences ever ... pure video gaming elegance"**

*Edge*



Based on the legendary 1967 season, Grand Prix Legends is the first ever historical racing simulation. The game's setting allows players to experience realistic racing action that is markedly different from that in modern-day sims. In particular, the race tracks of 1967 were far more exciting and dangerous than those in use today. Famous drivers, teams and the greatest racing circuits of all time are featured in the game. Grand Prix Legends is the first game to incorporate a 3-D "virtual" cockpit similar to those found in recent flight simulators, allowing the player's viewpoint to be "disconnected" from the cockpit graphic. G-forces acting on the player's "head" convey bumps, elevation changes, cornering forces and even collisions! With this state-of-the-art game, expect nothing less than the most compelling and immersive racing experience ever!

<http://www.sierra-online.co.uk>

**SIERRA**

Minimum system requirements: Windows 95, Pentium 166, 16MB RAM, SVGA card, 4x CD ROM Drive, Windows compatible soundcard. (Supports 3DFX) For further information contact: Cendant Software UK Ltd, Unit 2 Beacontree Plaza, Gillette Way, Reading, Berkshire RG2 0BS Tel: 0118 920 9111



# Direct move upsets retail

Sony says no big deal, but High Street is worried by precedent-setting Spice World bundle

A SLAP IN the face is how retail is viewing the recent PlayStation direct mail offer - although Sony insists that its broadening of the market will benefit everyone.

The retail row has been sparked by Sony's recent direct sales strategy on the Spice World game. A mailshot offers some 20,000 consumers on a Spice Girls database the opportunity to buy an exclusive hardware bundle featuring a PlayStation console, the Spice World game, a poster and bag for £129.99.

Sony claims that the campaign does not signal a new strategy to bypass the High Street, but rather that it was an opportunity to target a previously untapped demographic - the teenage girl. At the same time, it points out, retailers were warned of the promotion several weeks ago.

"Retail should not be surprised by this, because it was fully outlined to them at our autumn sales presentation," revealed



Sony's UK marketing manager Darren Carter.

"They shouldn't be concerned either. It was an opportunity that was presented to us and gives us the chance to attract new PlayStation users, in particular those who wouldn't necessarily have bought the game through retail.

"At the same time, if they buy a console through the promotion, they are going to want to buy more games, so that can only benefit the trade."

However, retailers - in particular independent stores - are clearly riled by the move,

claiming that the campaign is a blow to the High Street.

"On a number of occasions, Sony has commented on how the independent sector has contributed strongly to the success of PlayStation," commented Clive Bishop of indie trade body NASCR.

"This doesn't really seem to me to be the right way to thank those dealers. I think it is a good idea for Sony to grow and widen the market, because that will benefit everyone. But if they are looking to generate more sales, they should surely be driving consumers into retail."

## UK SOFTWARE REVENUES

Week ending September 26th 1998

	Last Week	This Week
<b>Total Market</b>	£11.4m	<b>£12.9m</b>
Full Price Console	£4.9m	<b>£6.0m</b>
Full Price PC	£4.3m	<b>£4.5m</b>
Budget Console	£1.4m	<b>£1.6m</b>
Budget PC	£0.7m	<b>£0.7m</b>

## THIS WEEK'S TOP EARNERS

- 1. Tekken 3**  
(Namco/Sony)  
PlayStation **£913,016**
- 2. F1 World Grand Prix**  
(Nintendo)  
N64 **£731,067**
- 3. Mission Impossible**  
(Infogrames)  
N64 **£659,585**
- 4. Colin McRae Rally**  
(Codemasters)  
PlayStation **£257,005**
- 5. C&C Retaliation**  
(Westwood/EA)  
PlayStation **£225,044**

Source: MCV

# Budget force be with you Now SimCity 3000 struggles

New Lucas line will follow relaunch of Activision budget range

STAR WARS, the brand that everybody loves, will emerge as a budget PC brand in its own right next month.

Back-catalogue Star Wars titles such as Dark Forces and X-Wing Vs Tie Fighter have previously been sold under Virgin's successful White Label. But LucasArts' recent switch to Activision as European distribution partner has caused a review of its secondary publishing strategy and a dedicated range called Star Wars Classics is the current internal favourite.

Meanwhile, LucasArts' other budget titles, such as Sam & Max

and Full Throttle look set to join Activision's newly revamped Essential Collection.

The year-old range has had a major overhaul, with new titles, new packaging and a new marketing strategy being unveiled to retail next Friday (October 9th).

Some 14 titles, including new additions Netstorm, Legacy of Kain, Dark Reign and Infacom Classics, will be released next week in eye-catching electric blue livery.

Each product will be fully boxed, retailing at £9.99. Marketing support will include advertising in the mainstream consumer press, with a heavyweight PR strategy supporting the spend.

"We've completely revamped the Essential Collection for our relaunch, to ensure that it becomes a top five player in the budget sector," said Activision's UK managing director John Burns.

"We're very pleased with the new look of the range - having moved away from the classic white budget packaging - and we will be broadening our marketing effort to hit the mainstream."

ANOTHER GAPING hole has emerged in the PC release schedule, with SimCity 3000 set to miss Christmas.

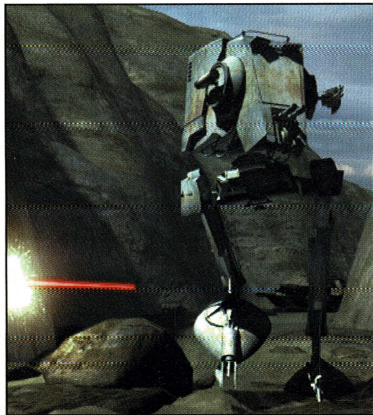
This latest blow to the format comes just weeks after publisher Electronic Arts admitted that newly acquired Westwood Studio's Tiberian Sun would also slip past the crucial period.

EA still has SimCity pencilled in for a late December release. But while the blockbuster-in-waiting could technically ship before

Christmas, it still wouldn't go on sale for another week.

SimCity 3000 has actually gone 'Alpha'. Indeed, EA says that an unusually glitch-free testing period might just see the product squeeze onto the shelves in time for the peak sales period. But the publisher is unlikely to rush things after waiting so long for its Maxis investment to bear fruit.

A \$1 million Euro marketing campaign is ready to roll once the product does arrive.



Star Wars classics arrive next month





## Comment

## A long way away, a new era begins...



Alright, so the Tokyo Game Show isn't ECTS or E3. Stuff over there can take so long to get over here that only a handful of UK execs make room for a bi-annual visit to one of the world's most daunting cities.

Indeed, much of what appears in Japan never makes it over here at all. And we wouldn't make head nor tail of it anyway.

But the event that kicks off next Friday is perhaps the closest the industry will come this year to one of those "I was there" moments. Those who do see Dreamcast unveiled properly (E3 doesn't count) will be quick to let everyone know about it.

This is the first real test for Sega. It must instantly impress the locals. It must assure them that Dreamcast games are significantly better than anything the PlayStation or N64 can offer.

Sony, meanwhile, will look to steal Sega's thunder with Ridge Racer 4 and a full explanation of just what the Personal Digital Assistant does - and what it's actually going to be called, for that matter.

No doubt about it, an immense task faces Sega. A good launch in Tokyo could guarantee a million sales in Japan and get things moving.

But Sony already has a new machine coming and it knows much more about launching a console than it did last time

The 40 millionth PlayStation was manufactured last month.

Stuart Dinsey

## Talking Shop

## Who needs a High Street anyway?

It has been three weeks or so since the massive Trafford Centre opened on the outskirts of Manchester. Other than being a building of so-called architectural interest it is just another retail mega-site, replicating a hundred other Arndales and dominated by familiar multiple stores intent on sucking the life out of the High Street.

Few malls give much thought to small independent retailers, let alone make room for them, and if they do they are consigned to inaccessible 'gallery' levels and featureless dead-end passages.

It is interesting to compare our shopping centres with their like in Australia, where there is positive discrimination towards the small independent stores.

Long ago, antipodean planners realised that independent stores were necessary to put soul into these bland monoliths. Anyone who has ever visited the giant Chatswood Mall just outside Sydney will be heartened to find that there are anywhere up to ten small independent stores squeezed between each and every multiple, all with prime frontages.

This policy makes every mall unique, interesting and - most importantly - profitable for the small independent. To ensure the 'out of mall' businesses continue to trade, they have adequate parking and rivers of yellow lines and predatory traffic wardens are rare.

Despite Government rhetoric, our trade bodies such as the FSB, NASCR and The Forum of Small Businesses should join forces and lobby hard before the High Streets become a monument to disproportionally high rates and apathy - frequented only by those people who have no private transport.

Following last week's piece on POS material, I am grateful that both BLT and Konami have pointed out to me they are willing to distribute POS to independent retailers.

You can fax a request to Konami on 01895 853 003 and call Bizarre Love Triangle on 0118 978 7443. There you are, a result.

Chris Ratcliff



## More choice for retailers

## PC software arm at Planet to challenge exclusive suppliers

PLANET DISTRIBUTION is to challenge the current status quo within the PC software distribution sector.

After building its business purely on video games lines since it was established eight years ago, Planet has now set up a dedicated PC division - poaching former Gem employees Giles Bryant and Bob Hill to spearhead the new push.

The company already boasts agreements with a number of peripherals companies, including Mad Catz, N-Gen, Sakar and Cyberstuff, but is firmly against the exclusive model when it comes to PC software.

"We have always felt that exclusive software distribution is of no benefit to retailers," pointed

out chief executive Yash Chadha.

"Our new division will allow stores to buy any PC title from us with no pressure on them to buy any other specific products. They can be assured that what they want, they'll get, rather than being driven to buy titles that just sit on their shelves for months."

Sales manager Giles Bryant added: "Our aim is to concentrate on only triple-A leisure products and the weekly games chart products, provide these at keen prices and ensure that they are constantly available.

"Not being tied to any publisher means that we can source from various suppliers and make the best available to our customers. Right now, Planet are the only serious indie distributor."

## Psygnosis stays multi-format

FURTHER REDUNDANCIES are not expected as Sony completes its review of the Psygnosis empire later this month - and Nintendo 64 development will continue.

The restructure of the Liverpool outfit has so far seen 30 job losses following the amalgamation of its two London studios and a further 40 more recently in the US.

A period of extended corporate review will end later this month, with Psygnosis confident that no further personnel will be lost.

Although the company recently licensed Wipeout 64 to Midway, the Sony-owned firm has not killed off support for Nintendo's rival to the PlayStation.

"We were originally looking at converting ODT, F1 and maybe Destruction Derby for the N64. These projects are now on hold," admitted communications manager Glen O'Connell.

"There has been some confusion about our plans for the format, particularly following the deal with Midway for Wipeout, but it is likely that we will still continue to develop for N64.

"We have an N64 licence and Sony has reiterated that it has no intention on restricting what we develop. But, we will be looking at the best routes to market and it may be that we hand over the publishing to other companies."

## Cards on the table

OTHER RETAILERS are surely going to cotton on soon, as Electronics Boutique revealed last week that its loyalty card now boasts over 600,000 members.

The success of the scheme, which offers consumers rewards for repeat purchases, has been pitched as a key element - along with overall market growth - in the UK chain's powerful financial performance.

As analysts' had expected, EB last week posted pre-tax profits up 150 per cent to £1.5 million for the six months ending July 31st, with turnover up 25 per cent to £53.5 million.

The firm has also reported a fine start to the second half, with store sales up 41 per cent overall.

## Life in their hands

THE LAUNCH PARTY was a year ago and Cendant staff twitch when you mention it, but Half-Life is going to be huge - and it will be here for Xmas. Probably.

Retail has become increasingly concerned that, following the delay on Tiberian Sun and news that SimCity 3000 is likely to slip too (see separate story on page 3), yet another major PC title might miss the crucial selling season.

Cendant has confirmed, however, that the hotly-tipped game will be available by the end of November.

Half Life is expected to be a huge hit for Cendant. A UK ship-out of over 50,000 units is planned, with the pan-European figure set at over 200,000.



# Konami considering PC attack

Blockbusters like Metal Gear Solid and ISS could arrive on computer by summer of next year

THE JAPANESE are coming, and all formats are fair game for the big three companies that Electronic Arts considers as its biggest rivals in the global entertainment software market.

Just as Capcom is setting up a European office and Squaresoft is looking to gain 'publisher' status (see story at bottom of page), so Konami is considering a move into the PC market.

Trials have already begun with the release of several local-orientated PC conversions in Japan, but the company is now deciding whether to start porting its very biggest console titles onto home computer.

The fact that Konami is already developing for Sega's Dreamcast console, which incorporates PC-inspired technology such as the Windows CE operating system

and VideoLogic's second generation PowerVR graphics chipset, could be the key to a shift in strategy.

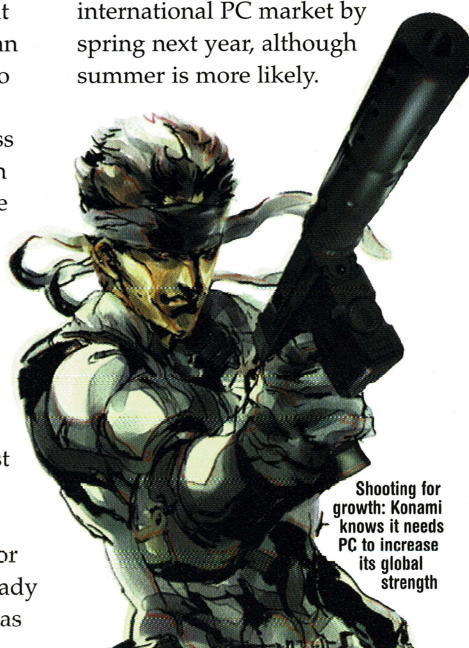
"We're always thinking about PC," offered Konami's European boss Kunio Neo. "Our goal is to be number one within the entertainment software business and we definitely need to be on PC in order to achieve that - we can't be number one if we just stay on console.

"But if we do come into the PC arena, we must come in right and only with the very best titles - so we have to be careful with our strategy."

MCV understands that whilst Konami has no intention of developing its PlayStation blockbuster Metal Gear Solid for other console formats, it is already on the drawing board for PC - as

is a version of the popular International Superstar Soccer series.

Konami could launch into the international PC market by spring next year, although summer is more likely.



## Wipeout coming

NINTENDO has moved to secure the arrival of Wipeout 64 in time for Christmas.

In what is clearly a highly political matter, it has emerged that the game will not be published by Psygnosis, Midway or GT Interactive in Europe, but by Nintendo's various territory distributors and subsidiaries.

Midway picked up the global rights to the Psygnosis-developed game last month, but GTI - which has first option on all Midway product in Europe - has passed over the title.

MCV understands that UK distributor THE Games has pencilled in a late November or early December release date.

## Punter power

MORE THAN 200,000 PlayStation owners will be tempted into Game's 71 UK retail stores over the next fortnight, as the 1998 PlayStation Games Championship gets underway.

Organised jointly by IDG Media's PlayStation Pro and PlayStation Zone magazine, the competition has already gained support from hardware suppliers Sony and Dattel, with national newspaper The Mirror guaranteeing on-going coverage of the event.

The final will be held in London on November 7th.

## It's that licence again, but not as we know it

BAD NEWS for Interplay, MicroProse and Simon & Schuster came earlier this week as Activision finally brought the Star Trek brand under one roof.

An international and exclusive 10-year agreement with Viacom Consumer Products, the licensing division of Paramount Pictures, covers all platforms and all properties - including the original Star Trek TV series and forthcoming output from Paramount Pictures.

And after so much confusion in the past, Activision has been keen

to lock out any ad-hoc deals with other publishers in the future.

Interplay and MicroProse have both enjoyed success with Star Trek products in the past, whilst Simon & Schuster Interactive has traditionally handled reference titles based on the brand.

Activision, meanwhile, is in ever bullish mood. The Paramount deal comes just a few weeks after the signing of LucasArts (MCV 5/9) and further highlights the company's rising status as a truly international publisher and distributor.

## Square confirms Euro plan

FLUSHED OUT by our recent lead story, Squaresoft has confirmed that it plans to set up a European HQ and become a publisher in its own right.

The Japanese giant, which has had a successful deal with Sony since the launch of the PlayStation, has a series of new titles coming in 1999.

Given its joint venture deals with Electronic Arts in Japan and the US, it would appear highly likely that the US giant will pick up the Square business (MCV 18/9) - the jewel in the crown being Final Fantasy VIII.

Square has not made a final decision on its European partner, but EA also has experience of giving third parties high levels of autonomy within its powerful distribution operation.

"We plan to be a publisher in Europe, not just a developer who supplies software to someone else," said Square's Akira Kaneko. "We're working hard to establish a European base which publishes under our own brand name."

Sony has accepted that EA is clearly in the box-seat, but has not yet given up hope of tempting it back into the fold.

## Newsire

### Myth II goes to GTI

GT Interactive has snapped up the Euro rights to Bungie's PC game Myth II: The Fallen Lords. The original was published by Eidos last year - and it received a trademark lawsuit from System 3 for its trouble.

GT Interactive: 0171 258 3791

### Koch goes Wild

Fast-rising Wild Things has signed a distribution deal with Koch Media. Effective immediately, it covers a full range of PC, PlayStation and N64 product lines - from memory cards to controllers, joysticks and steering wheels.

Koch Media: 01256 707767

### 'Buy THQ shares'

The good news keeps coming for THQ, following a major thumbs up from Piper Jaffray analyst Bob Peterson. He expects the firm's improved financial performance to continue and has recommended a 'buy' on its shares up to \$26. They were \$18 at press time.

THQ: 01483 767 656

### Calling all indies

Nintendo Direct continues to add extra polish to its indie retail service. A new telephone system has been installed, so ring them up and enjoy.

Nintendo Direct: 0990 000064

### Free speech

Auralog has sealed an OEM deal which will see Talk to Me language software given away free with Packard Bell PCs.

Auralog: 0171 929 6266

### Brits pay more for PCs

Senior executives from companies such as Compaq and Fujitsu claim that UK consumers are paying up to 25 per cent more than their European cousins for home computers. This is apparently due to British retailers demanding higher margins.

### Pressing matters

With perfect pre-Christmas timing, Ablex Audio Video has increased its CD manufacturing capacity by 40 per cent - from 25 million to 35 million discs per year. It has also just invested £350,000 in its growing packaging division.

Ablex: 01952 680131



## Newswire

## Hugo's there

Media Connection brings the popular European TV gameshow character Hugo to the UK on October 15th. It is launching edutainment title Hugo's Christmas Adventure and adventure game Wild River on PC, plus Hugo's Adventure on PlayStation. All three software releases are aimed at children aged six to 12.

**Media Connection:** 0171 3636133

## Helping hand for schools

Sherston Software has introduced two new initiatives for the education sector. The specialist publisher will supply schools with new low cost CD multi-packs and an upgraded technical support service.

**Sherston Software:** 01666 843200

## Reah arrives on DVD

Following the original PC CD-ROM version's arrival at retail, Black Friar is launching Reah DVD at the end of the month. It is the company's first outing on the new format.

**Black Friar:** 0171 395 0825

## Trust in Truster

Israeli outfit Makh Shevet is seeking a UK distributor for Truster, its lie detector software that can be used over the phone. It would retail for around £100.

**Makh Shevet:** +009 729 955 2402

## Find the way on PC

Attica and Ordnance Survey are lining up the release of the third edition of the Interactive Atlas of Great Britain on PC CD-ROM. It will be released on October 14th at £29.99.

**Attica:** 01865 791346

## First under a tenner

Guildhall Leisure has just launched its My First Software range. It is available to retail now and comprises 12 titles for five-11 year olds at £9.99.

**Guildhall:** 01302 890000

## Cheap is good

The Learning Company's CEO Kevin O'Leary publicly welcomed the advent of cheap PCs and DVD software at the recent Software Publishers Association annual meeting in the US. "Every time there's a change in pricing hardware we should get excited," said O'Leary.

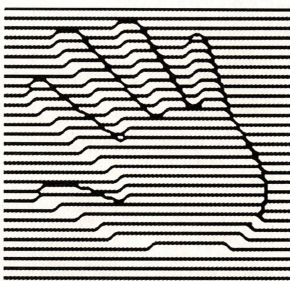
# Brit chaps to bust back

Re-organised Bitmap Brothers seal Z2 deal as GTI starts growing its Euro-developed line-up

## LEGENDARY UK

codeshop The Bitmap Brothers is back in the spotlight with a new management structure, a sequel to Z and a product deal with GT Interactive.

Two Bitmap partners, Stephen Kelly and Eric Matthews, have retired from the partnership leaving the third, Mike Montgomery, continuing the company as a sole trader. Both Kelly and Matthews will remain



at The Bitmap Brothers as employees.

"Steve, Eric and I believe that restructuring the business in this way allows us to focus and exploit our various talents without distractions," said Montgomery. "This

will allow The Bitmap Brothers to continue to grow and develop."

For GT Interactive (which currently sells Z on its budget Replay label), the initial one-off

deal is the fruit of an on-running campaign to source European third party titles.

"We believe that The Bitmap Brothers with Z2 have found the publishing home for what is destined to be one of the benchmark titles of next year," commented GTI Europe's publishing director Marc Swallow.

As for Z2, details are sketchy, although Montgomery claims that the real-time strategy game is "the most exciting product we've worked on to date". Quite an accolade, considering the Bitmaps' back catalogue boasts classics like Xenon and Speedball.

## PC still key to Sega's software strategy

Third party deals wanted as Sega continues PC publishing push, looks for Dreamcast crossover

**SEGA IS HUNTING** third party PC titles as it looks to bolster its European software portfolio and studio relations.

The PC division has already picked up one product, Conflict of Nations, a real-time war game from Britsoft firm NMS Software which is currently slated for mid-1999.

It has previously published just one external title, Formula Carts from Manic Media. But buoyed by the relative success of its own Saturn conversions plus the

imminent arrival of Dreamcast, the outfit is shifting up a gear.

"We're now actively looking to acquire more titles from developers," explained Hitendra Naik, Sega PC's European marketing manager. "We can give them an excellent opportunity to target both the PC and Dreamcast, and we get to spend more money knowing we can amortise costs across two platforms."

Sega PC also has two internal products in the pipeline. As reported last week, racing game

Sonic-R will be next, due in November. Sega Rally 2 follows in February, some six months before its European Dreamcast debut.

Unlike previous Saturn ports, Sega has substantially reworked Sonic-R for PC. "Other Sonic conversions sold well, so it's worth the extra effort to improve the graphics and offer 3D support," said Naik.

"While products like Virtua Fighter 2 and House of Dead look good on PC, you really need to add more depth for the platform."

## Gremlin signs (Lee) Westwood

**A TRIO** of British sports stars are to back Gremlin's growing Actua Sports range.

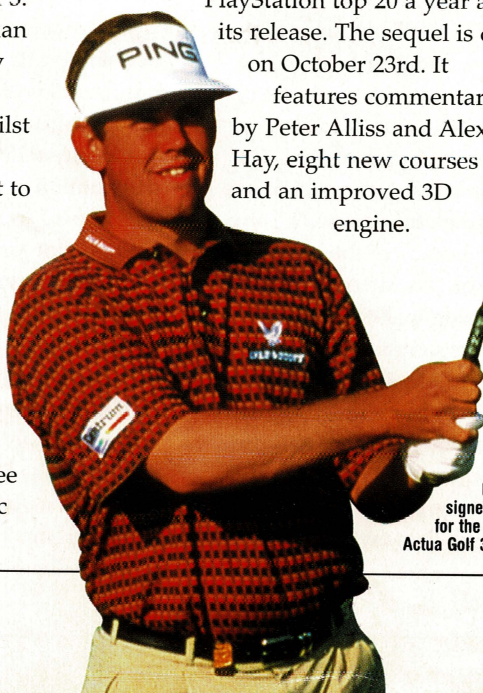
The Sheffield publisher has just secured golfer Lee Westwood to endorse Actua Golf 3. England captain Alan Shearer has already been confirmed for Actua Soccer 3, whilst Greg Rusedski is lending his support to Actua Tennis.

Westwood, who claims to be an avid games player, is currently considered the best golfer in Europe. "Having Lee on board is fantastic news for the Actua

Sports series," said Ian Stewart, Gremlin's joint chief executive. "Golf fans are not going to be disappointed."

Actua Golf 2 remains in the PlayStation top 20 a year after its release. The sequel is due on October 23rd. It

features commentary by Peter Alliss and Alex Hay, eight new courses and an improved 3D engine.



He's young, British, and signed to Gremlin for the forthcoming Actua Golf 3

## Info-to-go for retail

**A BEST-FRIEND** for indie retailers, that's what GameXpress aims to be.

The console game information service features supplier details (including the two cheapest suppliers for every product), weekly fax updates, a rental chart and more.

GameXpress is the brainchild of Karl Mace, the proprietor of Harrogate's Warp 9 store. He claims that in the three months since the service was launched, it has grown from being simply a buying guide into a complete counter-top bible for retailers.

GameXpress includes a reference section offering detailed product information such as number of players, compatibility with peripherals and scores from the leading specialist press magazines.



“One of **the Best**  
**Driving Games**  
**ever** and certainly the  
**the finest Rallying**  
**Title to date**”

9/10



PC REVIEW

# COLIN MCRAE<sup>TM</sup> **RALLY**

THE NUMBER 1 SMASH HIT, NOW ON PC - STREET DATE 9<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER



UK  
Championship, Rally, Time Trial  
modes & Rally School option

Greece  
Ice, snow, gravel, tarmac,  
& mud surfaces

Monte Carlo  
5 camera views including 'HeadCam'

New Zealand  
2 player split screen option

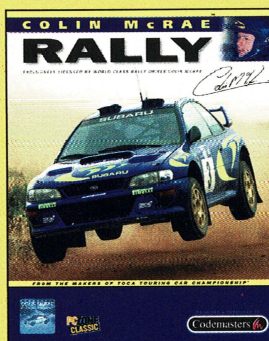
Corsica  
Real-Time crash damage  
& Setup/Repair options

Australia  
Super-Special Stages for exciting  
double loop head-to-head rallies

Indonesia  
Drive major rally cars - 4WD, 2WD  
which will even get muddy!

“The benchmark for  
rally games on the PC”

93%  
PC ZONE



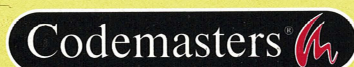
“A wheel-spinning,  
mud-churning,  
gravel-spraying thing  
of beauty”

92%  
PC GAMER



For more information contact:

Codemasters UK: Tel: 01926 814 132 Fax: 01926 817 357 Codemasters France: Tel: 00 334 7856 7610 Fax: 00 334 7856 7611  
Codemasters Germany: Tel: 00 49 89 23035 188 Fax: 00 49 89 23035 298  
www.colinmcrae.com





# milia games

February 9-12

**There's this guy going around at parties who used to be just an underling at some game developing company and he brags all evening about going to the French Riviera on business and that, thanks to a stand he had at this trade show in Cannes, he met an interactive media publisher, sold him a game concept, and now has his own company supposedly with offices all over the world.**

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# Grolier grows its own

UK publisher establishes internal software development department - increases output

**SOMEONE FORGOT** to tell Grolier Interactive about the trend towards external studios.

The Oxford based company has embarked upon a controlled in-house development program, with two titles already in production.

According to Grolier's product development manager Ian Mathias, external deals aren't always as sweet as they appear.

"Internal teams let you control your own destiny," he said. "With external developers, you're often at the mercy of whichever publisher shouts the loudest - or

withholds the paycheque."

Mathias (who previously set up BMG's development outfit) says extra impetus towards the internal studio came when Grolier picked up the lucrative licence to Anne McCaffrey's Pern fantasy novels.

The action game Dragonflight will kick off the series next year. In development for 18 months, Grolier's initial recruitment found six staff for this project. Working closely with McCaffrey, they regular visit her home 'Dragonhole' in Ireland to ensure the game fits her vision.

In contrast, Grolier's second

game (currently untitled) was created from scratch. The only brief was platform independence and multi-player capabilities.

"With Dragonflight almost certain to spawn further internal projects, we wanted to do something riskier," said Mathias.

He shrugs off well-known internal development failures elsewhere.

"Some companies have thrown vast sums of money at a wall then walked away after twelve months," noted Mathias. "But our parent firm Lagardere has a long term vision."

## Boosting the Brain Drain

**CALIFORNIAN DREAMING** could become reality for even more British developers.

The highly rated US recruitment agency Michael Katz & Associates is now targeting talent this side of the Atlantic.

And an agreement struck between Katz and the UK recruiters Interactive Selection at last month's ECTS will see the two companies work together to place candidates in the States.

"There is still a big demand for

European development talent in the US," commented David Smith, managing director of Interactive selection. "We can now help those that are determined to work in the Californian sunshine."

Smith shrugs off fears of a talent exodus, which so plagued the industry in the early 90s.

"Don't forget that those that go eventually come back to the UK with unrivalled experience that would be difficult to match at home," he said.

## Turning up the Heat

**SEGASOFT** is planning a UK version of its US multi-player gaming service Heat.net.

It has begun trials with ICL's Game Zone, SegaSoft's Net ambitions being fuelled by its position as sole ISP for Dreamcast in Japan and the US.

There are no official plans in Europe though, where the inclusion of a modem in the console is yet to be confirmed.

SegaSoft is owned by Sega, but is run as an entirely distinct business.

### Talent

# Fire-starter

Insomniac Games plans a wake-up call for other PlayStation studios...

**AT LAST**, a PlayStation title which looks as good as its sales potential.

Sony will no doubt be rather pleased once Spyro the Dragon is released and everyone sees how good it really is. And Nintendo, as if it hasn't got enough on its plate already, will be given even more to think about.

For this dragon-breathing platform game could pass for a native on Nintendo's machine and all but buries the ageing 32-bit versus 64-bit argument for good. Too kick the boot in, Spyro also stars the kind of cute characters that Nintendo may have previously thought its own.

Insomniac Games is the developer getting such stunning results from Sony's ageing



Spyro shows what can be achieved on PlayStation

hardware. Founded in 1994 by Theodore C. Price in Los Angeles, Insomniac's debut title, Disruptor, was hardly a landmark. But it did kick off a relationship with Universal Interactive Studios, who also publishes Spyro. Distribution by Sony completes the set-up.

"Our mission is to create games

that are always on the cutting edge," explains Price. "Generally, technology drives the art and the gameplay, so we plan to consistently push gaming platforms to the limit."

Spyro has just gone on sale in the US. European localisation has taken its time though (every dragon's lips have had to be synched for five different languages) but Sony is sticking to its October 23rd release date.

Insomniac, meanwhile, has already begun work on its next title. "We've still got plenty of ground to explore with 3D character games," says Price.

"But we're always trying to change the rules as much as we can - we won't limit ourselves to one genre."

### Production Line

#### Conference in Turin

Italian company Videocomputer SpA is organising an International Game Developer Conference in Turin for October 4th and 5th. On the agenda will be dual input devices and voice recognition. For more information, call 0039 01140 34828.

#### No free lunch

Cash-strapped Internet gamers are being tempted to US service provider 2AM with free membership and unlimited free play. The catch? Users must spend a certain amount at 2AM's sponsor's sites. A gauge ensures gamers do their duty. 2AM: [www.2am.com](http://www.2am.com)

#### Six of the best

Six high profile PC games are now rumoured to be in development for Dreamcast. These include Half-life (Cendant), Messiah (Shiny), Drakan (Psygnosis), Unreal (Epic), Incoming (Rage) and Outcast (Infogrames). So much for original content.

#### 3DO starts its engine

Trip Hawkins' 3DO Studios is the latest company to seek third party licensing deals for a game engine. The engine for 3DO's upcoming Requiem: Avenging Angel boasts real-time shadows, advanced AI routines and smooth character modelling. In our view, it is certainly capable of generating visuals comparable with Epic's popular Unreal engine.

#### Shock for Looking Glass

Looking Glass is working on a sequel to its cult title System Shock. A 3D RPG, System Shock 2 will be based around an updated version of the engine created for the company's hotly tipped first-person medieval romp Thief: The Dark Project. Looking Glass: +1 617-441-6333

#### Sega synergy swells

Sega's new Naomi arcade board will use 3D chipsets from the same VideoLogic stable as that employed in Dreamcast. The Naomi-board replaces the current Model 3, which has hosted games from Sega Rally to Virtua Fighter. Naomi is three times more powerful than rival firms' current arcade boards.



## Newswire

## Worldwide closures at TRU

As part of a major revamping of the chain, Toys R Us is to close 50 of its international stores, as well as nine in the US. Most of the international stores to be closed are in France and Germany, while the UK chain is likely to be unaffected. The move, which will also see a number of Kids R Us clothing stores in the US closed, is expected to lead to some 3,000 job losses internationally.

## THQ makes top 100

THQ has been listed at number 12 in the top 100 fastest-growing companies in the US, according to Individual Investor magazine. To qualify for a placing in the listing, each company had to double its profits in its two most recent quarters.

## Days Inn deal for Cendant

The Cendant Group is cross-promoting its software titles across its diverse range of companies in the US. Visitors at the Days Inn chain who pay their bills with an American Express card will receive a number of free games titles from the Sierra Sports range. At the same time, Days Inn guests who choose to actually buy Sierra Sports games can choose a free Knowledge Adventure Reading Blaster title.

## Take 2 moves up

Nasdaq has approved Take 2 Interactive's request to switch from the Small Cap Market to the National Market listings. The announcement saw the firm's share price rise by \$1.

## Now Mplay hits Japan

The Mplayer online games channel continues its international expansion, having now signed a deal with Fujitsu to offer the service to consumers in Japan. The news comes just weeks after Mplayer revealed its move into Korea. Europe is expected next, with the UK likely to be targeted first.

## New route for Sega in Italy

## Giochi Preziosi sets up new division to take Dreamcast into new specialist retail channel

**AFTER A DISASTER** with Saturn, Sega's exclusive Italian distributor has switched its retail focus for next year's launch of Dreamcast.

Longtime exclusive partner Giochi Preziosi has recently established a new division, GP Tronic, and it is this 'new media' side of the company's business that will handle the new console.

GP Tronic already handles a computer accessories range and a Daewoo set-top box, which it is



GP Tronic arm will take Dreamcast to computer stores

selling into computer outlets and high-end electronic retailers.

The decision to add Dreamcast to the portfolio has been made by Giochi Preziosi to give the new hardware a fighting chance against PlayStation and N64 in the territory.

Historically, Giochi Preziosi has concentrated on the toy channel,

where it is a powerful specialist distributor. It scored great success with the Mega Drive with this policy, shifting around 300,000 units, but the shift in demographics amongst buyers of the latest generation of consoles meant that the Saturn never fit easily with toy dealers - selling less than 10,000 units in total.

The establishment of GP Tronic could also see Giochi Preziosi expand into the PC entertainment market, with the appointment of third party software companies and more peripherals firms.

## For all the sales in China

**CHINA IS EMERGING** into a key export territory - especially for those software publishers keen on opening up new markets.

Although the region has historically suffered major piracy problems, it is now becoming increasingly attractive - thanks to a surge in home PC sales.

According to a recent report by market research firm Advanced Forecasting HuiCong, growth of over 30 per cent is expected over the next couple of years - following an already impressive increase over the past few years.

"Growth is significantly higher than in many other countries.

Therefore, the Chinese PC market will play an increasingly important role shaping the global PC market," said the report.

Already Western games firms are looking to have a presence in China, hoping that the availability of localised boxed product at acceptable prices will go some way to counter the problem of illegitimate software sales.

GT Interactive has become the latest, signing a distribution deal with Ubi Soft - which has some 150 employees based in Shanghai.

It will see a number of GTI titles localised for the territory, starting with Unreal.

## US market leaps

**MUSIC, MOVIE AND VIDEO** sales are being outstripped in the US by entertainment software, says the IDSA.

The US trade body's new market report has revealed that the first six months of the year saw growth of over 30 per cent, after a 38 per cent leap in 1997.

At the same time, household penetration of next generation consoles is expected to reach 27-30 million units by the end of the year, while some 45 per cent of US homes will boast a PC.

Conversely, the IDSA has reported that piracy now costs the global market some \$3.2 million.

## Territory Update

Japan	Netherlands	Germany	USA
<b>PC CD-ROM</b>	<b>PC CD-ROM</b>	<b>PC CD-ROM</b>	<b>PC CD-ROM</b>
1. Flight Simulator '98	1. 7 Kingdoms Pack	1. Bundesliga Manager '98	1. Starcraft
2. After Devil Force	2. Commandos	2. Anno 1602	2. Big Game Hunter
3. Microsoft Golf	3. Final Fantasy VII	3. Commandos	3. Diablo
4. Special Force	4. Red Alert Mega Pack	4. Knights & Merchants	4. Unreal
5. Far-Distance Augusta	5. Urban Assault	5. Dune 2000	5. Deer Hunter
<b>PLAYSTATION</b>	<b>PLAYSTATION</b>	<b>NON GAMES</b>	<b>CONSOLE (ACTION)</b>
1. Metal Gear Solid	1. Tekken 3	1. Data Breaker Lexicon '99	1. WWF War Zone
2. God-Seal Action	2. Gran Turismo	2. Visienkarten-Druckerei	2. Banjo Kazooie
3. SD Gundam	3. Heart of Darkness	3. D-Info '97	3. Goldeneye 007
4. Pro Baseball '98 OL	4. Premier Manager	4. Telefonbuch für Deutschland	4. Gran Turismo
5. XI	5. Kula World	5. GID Route '98	5. Tekken 3
<b>NINTENDO 64</b>	<b>NINTENDO 64</b>	<b>GAME BOY</b>	<b>CONSOLE (SIMULATION)</b>
1. Legend of Zelda	1. ISS Soccer '98	1. V-Rally	1. Air Combat
2. Lordly Caliber	2. Banjo Kazooie	2. Mega Man 2	2. Loaded Gun Hits
3. Pockemon Stadium	3. Super Mario 64	3. Super Land Mario	3. Top Gun
4. Mother 3	4. Bust A Move 2	4. Die Schlurpfe 3	4. Thunderstrike II
5. Super Mario 64	5. Yoshi's Story	5. Super Mario Land 4	5. Gunship

Source: Login/64Dream/Famitsu

Source: Virgin Retail

Source: Media Control

Source: Softrends (Aug)/NPD,TRST (Aug)





# Sorry Mulder and Scully but the truth is in here!

GEN X series

There's no mystery  
about how good - and  
how keenly priced - these  
new GenX joysticks are



Manufactured to the highest specification, containing a host of features, the GenX series keeps players in control of the action - and that's the honest truth. Inhabitants of this planet will be pleased to know that the first intergalactic delivery has just beamed down. The GenX 700, GenX 500 and 500L are available now.



#### GenX 700 features:

- PC compatible • Combines analogue and digital controls in one unit • 8 Fire buttons
- A rotational movement rudder
- Multi-view HAT switch • Full size Bio Throttle
- Control mode selectors • Metal weighted base
- 7 foot cable • Keyboard port by-pass

#### GenX 500 features:

- Compatible with Windows 95 and 98 • 3D handle
  - 4 Fire Buttons • Rudder • Multi-view HAT switch
  - Throttle Control • 7 foot cable
- The GenX 500 also comes in a left-handed version (500L) and is the only dedicated left-handed joystick on the market

For more information please contact: Quickshot (Europe) Limited Unit D1 Tariff Road London N17 0EH  
Tel: 0181 365 1993 or Fax: 0181 808 7553 Internet: [www.quickshot.com](http://www.quickshot.com)

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# PLEASE RELEASE ME

Never mind the inevitable hardware price-cut or revitalised bundle, retail is more concerned about the quality and quantity of N64 software titles. Distributor THE Games insists that things are perfectly under control. But are they? **Steve Merrett** reports...

## CONTINUING RIVALRY

between Nintendo and Sony is reminiscent of the old Tortoise and the Hare fable.

Sony's eager PlayStation has gained a massive lead, passing the two million units mark with ease in the UK and boasting a software library in the hundreds.

In the meantime, after a slow start, Nintendo boosted its sales enormously with the move to £99 around this time last year and has released a slow but steady stream of supporting titles.

It's a familiar pattern and one that worked to Nintendo's advantage when its Super NES far

outlived Sega's Mega Drive. There was little between the two 16-bit machines technically, but SNES software was of a higher calibre and it gained a reputation for quality over quantity.

This, according to Shelly Friend of THE Games, will again be the key to the machine's longevity.

"The name of the game is the games," she states. "Quality software drives everything and this autumn and winter we have the best line up of games ever."

At present, there are 68 N64 titles available in the UK, but Friend expects this to pass the 100 barrier by Christmas. While

## N64 Releases

Yes, we know that this list is subject to change, but Nintendo distributor THE Games expects the UK N64 game count to hit 100 by Christmas, and these are some of the key titles that are supposed to make that happen...

### October:

#### NASCAR '99

**Electronic Arts**

This is a 3D racer based on US circuits. The PlayStation and PC versions were less than successful and initial specialist press reports indicate that the game is 'boring' and 'the oval courses are like driving around a loo seat'.

#### NBA Jam '99

**Acclaim**

An old Acclaim favourite with all-new 3D courts, twirling camera views and motion-captured players lining up alongside the series' outlandish special moves and shot styles. Good title but not huge.

#### NFL Blitz

**Midway/GT Interactive**

Arcade-based American Football title. Similar in style to the NBA Jam series, with minimal controls and OTT tackles and runs. Healthy reviews upwards of 85 per cent so far, which is rare for a Midway release.

#### Silicon Valley

**Take 2**

Puzzle game created by DMA Design. Adequate, playable and any new N64 arrival is welcome. File next to Puzzle Bobble and Wetrix.

#### Bomberman Hero

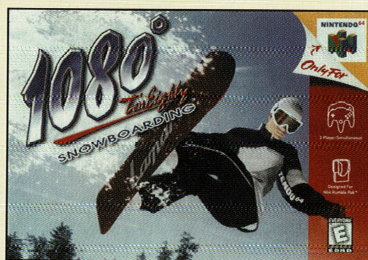
**Hudsonsoft/THE Games**

The immortal hero returns for a second bite of the Nintendo cherry.

#### Madden '99

**Electronic Arts**

Surprisingly, only one Madden has hit the N64 in its two years on sale, but EA aims to rectify it with this update featuring all new player stats. Might slip to first week of December.



Top snowboarding title finally arrives this month

#### NHL Hockey '99

**Electronic Arts**

The first ice hockey game for the Nintendo machine. The emphasis is on speed and TV-style presentation, so expect a typically polished title.

#### 1080 Snowboarding

**Nintendo**

Already a massive success in the US, the PAL version finally slides into UK stores.

#### Gex 2

**GT Interactive**

Reptilian platform antics based on the Gex 3D PlayStation game. Nice enough, but no blockbuster.

### November:

#### F-Zero X

**Nintendo**

A return to Nintendo's roots with an excellent update of an old Super NES classic. Makes good use of the N64's 3D capabilities and import review scores are very favourable. Release date currently set at November 6th.

#### Starshot: Space Circus Fever

**Infogrames**

Cute rival to the Mario series. A possible surprise hit.

#### Tennis 2

**Ubi Soft**

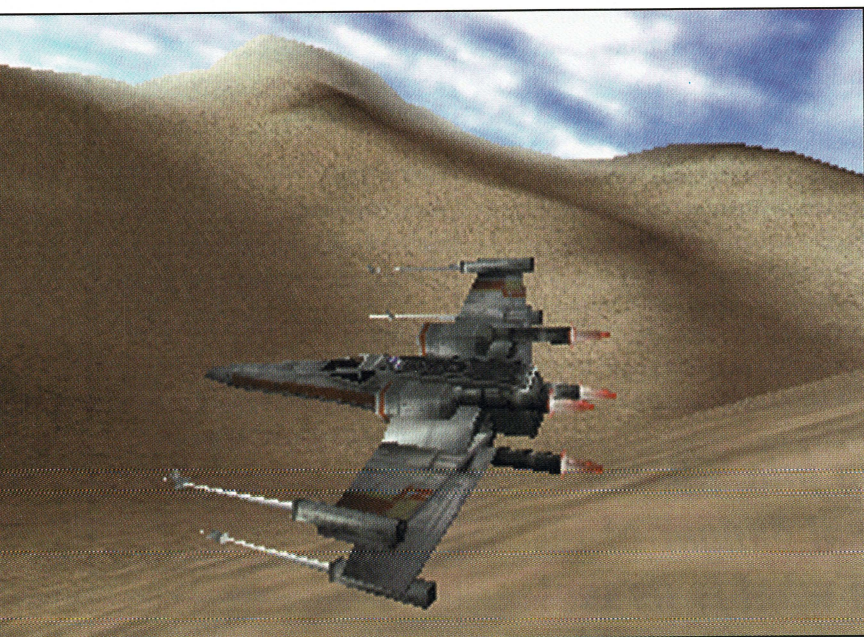
A return to tennis for Ubi Soft, which has always had a love of the game and knocked out some fine titles in the past. Could be good.

#### NFL Quarterback Club '99

**Acclaim**

The second NFL effort from Acclaim. More teams, more stats, more action. You know the score.





Sony's line-up may double that, Nintendo feels that its are of a generally higher standard, which will provide a useful edge.

Fact is, many of the new games are impressive. Third-party titles, such as Acclaim's Turok 2 and Ubi Soft's Buck Bumble are already garnering positive interest, and Friend feels these and Nintendo's home-grown wares create a formidable line-up.

The majority of new N64 games have been reviewed favourably, with only EA's NASCAR being heavily knocked back.

"Our strongest titles coming out between now and Christmas are

F1 World Grand Prix, F-Zero, 1080 Snowboarding and obviously The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time," Friend enthuses.

"All these have exceptional gameplay and graphics. F1 World Grand Prix and 1080 beat the competition hands down - and everyone knows that Zelda is a Miyamoto masterpiece."

**B**etween now and Christmas, a number of existing PlayStation titles are N64 bound - with Nintendo out to prove that anything Sony can do, it can do better. "Micro Machines, V-Rally 64 and Wipeout 64 have done

very well on other formats but will look and play even better on the N64," Friend explains.

"We have the best quality games on the market and whilst we've had a quiet first half, our second half line up is the best we've ever seen on the N64, with 12 triple-A titles still to come."

All that said, it has since emerged that Micro Machines may miss Christmas and neither Midway (which has gained global rights from Psygnosis) or GT Interactive (which publishes all Midway products in Europe) will comment on just when we should expect Wipeout to appear. At press time, it was understood that THE Games itself is now likely to distribute the game in the UK.

Meanwhile, Nintendo of Europe insists that it has gone some way to redressing industry concerns over cartridge prices. Production costs have been cut, and the majority - but not all - of new cartridges will be £40.

Eidos Interactive, however, is unconvinced by Nintendo's cost reductions and recently pulled Fighting Force from its UK release schedule. "We really don't think the market is there," explained Mike McGarvey to MCV last month.

"We don't like the fact that, whatever Nintendo Europe is saying these days, we have to

submit the game to Japan and take such a financial risk with the manufacturing." Instead, Eidos is opting for the less risky route of a conversion of its Michael Owen licence, with football games invariably selling well whatever the format. Or, to some extent, quality.

The Eidos reticence comes after many software houses were left with expensive returned stock towards the end of the Super NES era, and this could be blamed for the trickle of third-party titles when the N64 was launched.

Both Acclaim and Ocean (now Infogrames) were hit hard by remaindered stock, but have been reassured enough to return to the N64 fold.

"The N64 is a strong part of our future plans," offers Infogrames' Stephen Hey. "Before Christmas we have three key launches (Mission Impossible, V-Rally and Starshot: Space Circus Fever) and each of these represents a different marketing axis for the group."

But is Infogrames still wary of the cost of cartridge production? "Not really, otherwise we'd only develop Game Boy product. We have always supported the Nintendo machines even when many pulled out, and there will be several more products already slated for next year, including Jest and Looney Tunes

(continued on page 14)

## Rayman 2

**Ubi Soft**

Hand-throwing platform japes with Ubi Soft's established console hero.

## Body Harvest

**Gremlin**

DMA's first N64 title is an all-out blaster, with the player stealing armed vehicles while waging war against insect invaders. One of the strongest third party releases to date.

## Glover

**Hasbro Interactive**

The toy giant's first N64 outing, courtesy of Brit-developed puzzler.

## Buck Bumble

**Ubi Soft**

Argonaut-developed 3D shooter, a bit like Starwing. Big hope for strong N64 supporter Ubi Soft.

## Extreme G 2

**Acclaim**

Improved sequel to the futuristic racer. Additions include more tracks and better graphics.

## FIFA '99

**Electronic Arts**

An updated version of World Cup '98, with emphasis this time on league teams.

## Tonic Trouble

**Ubi Soft**

Unusual platform game, but initial previews have been favourable.

## Penny Racers

**THQ**

Takara-developed racer due very end of the month, or early December.

## Holy Magic Century

**Konami**

Role-playing game set within an impressive real-time world.

## Turok 2

**Acclaim**

The only challenger to Zelda in terms of sales potential. The Iguana team has completely rewritten the original Turok 3D engine. Huge expectations at Acclaim and it certainly won't disappoint at retail.

## December:

### V-Rally 64

**Infogrames**

At last a 'serious' racer that lives up to the potential the console offers. V-Rally 64 is a huge improvement on the much-praised PlayStation version, with more detailed courses, improved handling and a genuine feel of speed. Should sell buckets.

### WCW Vs Nitro Revenge

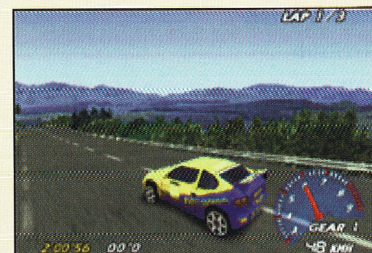
**THQ**

Spandex fumbling as the oddballs of wrestling get to grips within a series of 3D rings. As WWF Warzone via Acclaim proved, this licence should never be under-estimated.

### Rogue Squadron

**LucasArts**

X-Wing battles set within the Star Wars universe, courtesy of LucasArts. Distribution is through Nintendo/THE Games, as the recent Lucas deal with Activision doesn't cover Nintendo 64. A very useful addition to the Christmas roster.



Can V Rally do it again the Nintendo way?

### Wipeout 64

**THE Games/Psygnosis**

Recently signed to Midway, expect this to hit the UK via THE Games not GT Interactive.

### F1 Racing '98

**Ubi Soft**

Follow-up to last year's hit.

### Legend of Zelda

**Nintendo**

The single most important game in Nintendo's line-up.

### Duke Nukem: Time to Kill

**GT Interactive**

More 3D carnage courtesy of GTI's smooth talking killing machine.



(continued from page 13) Space Race."

Acclaim is also very positive about the N64's future, with nine titles in the pipeline.

"We had no reluctance in supporting N64," says Rod Cousens of returning the cartridge fold. "This is a clear distinction between supporting a rising system in a rising market and supporting a rising system which is not hindered by software congestion."

Cousens also thinks Nintendo could use a more "aggressive, raw, harder approach in its focus on the seasonal peak period, supporting titles such as Turok 2 and Legend of Zelda as these will be the movers and shakers, influencing hardware sales."

Retail clearly wants more quality games and has been encouraged by the recent price-cuts on forthcoming and catalogue releases to £39.99. The fact that so few third parties think like Acclaim and Infogrames, however, plus Nintendo's own problems with slippage mean that Christmas could still seem a bit lean when it comes to powerful new arrivals on the shelves.

**H**MV's computer games manager Gerry Berkley stated last week that "what would do us all good is more triple-A titles." Game Guide, which provides a

variety of services for the specialist sector, was "delighted" with the software price-cuts but has reservations. "It will be interesting to see whether third parties can come into line," offered boss Chris Ratcliff.

Konami's recent £35 retail price for ISS 98, plus Infogrames' and Acclaim's £39.99 tag for Mission Impossible, V-Rally and Turok 2 indicate that Nintendo and at least two of its third parties do seem to

new Sony machine's rumoured backwards compatibility could help smooth this over.

As both THE Games and retailers agree, it all boils down to software in the end. Nintendo certainly looks set to enjoy a busier release schedule this Christmas and beyond. But are enough games coming in order to really hurt its arch rival?

The claims that Nintendo games are better than Sony's are borne

**If any key titles slip into '99, the format will be in real danger of failing to maximise what is its last Christmas as the market's most advanced console.**

be working together.

According to Nintendo, everything is in place for a belated surge of Nintendo activity, and THE Games plans to expand its market share to 50 per cent within the next 12 months. But right now it is a long, long way behind overall. And knows it.

With Sony expected to unveil PlayStation 2 at the Tokyo Game Show next spring, Nintendo is probably hoping Sony will follow precedent and lose momentum as it switches horses - although the

out to an extent, although the PlayStation has more than a few aces up its sleeve this Christmas. Retailers and consumers do seem to associate the Nintendo 64 with quality releases, but if any key titles slip into '99, the format will be in real danger of failing to maximise its last Christmas as the market's most advanced console.

Zelda has to make it. And you can bet that the team at THE Games are praying for that to happen just as much as retail and the games public.

## N64 ESSENTIALS

Whether new releases or not, these must be stocked...

### Goldeneye

Rare/Nintendo

Quite simply, the best game available for the machine at present.

### ISS 98

Konami

The most playable football game on any format. And cheap too.

### Turok 2: Seeds of Evil

Acclaim

So large and detailed that even the most cynical magazines have been blown away. Will sell buckets.

### Legend of Zelda

Nintendo

Will trounce everything in its path. Creator Shigeru Miyamoto is regarded as God-like by Nintendo fans in the know. This is why.

### Banjo & Kazooie

Nintendo

This summer release has the legs to run through Christmas and beyond.

### V-Rally

Infogrames

At last a 'serious racer' of real quality makes it to the N64. A test of dual system ownership, though.

## Looming Titles For 1999

### South Park

Acclaim

Expected in time for Sky's unveiling of the second South Park series. Could actually prove to be surprisingly popular amongst N64 owners - depending on game quality, of course. Very little, if anything, has been seen of it to date.

### Micro Machines

Codemasters

Uses the same 3D graphics as the PlayStation game, but even faster and smoother. The perfect multi-player game - and will be sorely missed if it doesn't make Christmas.

### Perfect Dark

Nintendo

Rare's first-person non-Bond follow-up to Goldeneye isn't expected until September '99 but already advance word indicates that Joanna Dark's debut is set to blow away all comers. Move over Lara?

### Quake 2

GT Interactive

More carnage, more guns, more multi-player madness. A big hit.

### Donkey Kong World

Nintendo

Nothing has actually been seen yet, but this is being billed as 'Donkey Country in 3D'. Expect a tie-in with the Fox Kids cartoon of the same name.

### Earthworm Jim 3D

Interplay

Another sadly delayed title. Shiny's 16-bit hero undergoes the 3D treatment.

### Twelve Tales of Conker 64

Nintendo

Rare's cute squirrel has been delayed slightly, but imagine an ever-sweeter Banjo Kazooie and you're halfway there. And developer Rare never seems to disappoint.

### Twisted Edge Snowboarding

Nintendo

Could this be one snowboarding game too many? Too early to say, really, and it all depends on the gameplay.

### Castlevania

Konami

Another old favourite revived. Konami's Japanese developers have created a stunning looking platform game that remains true to the original series, but has gameplay that runs considerably deeper than the majority of N64 platform fare.

This dashing fellow hits the N64 next year, when the popular Castlevania series finally hits Nintendo's flagship





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# **MONACO**

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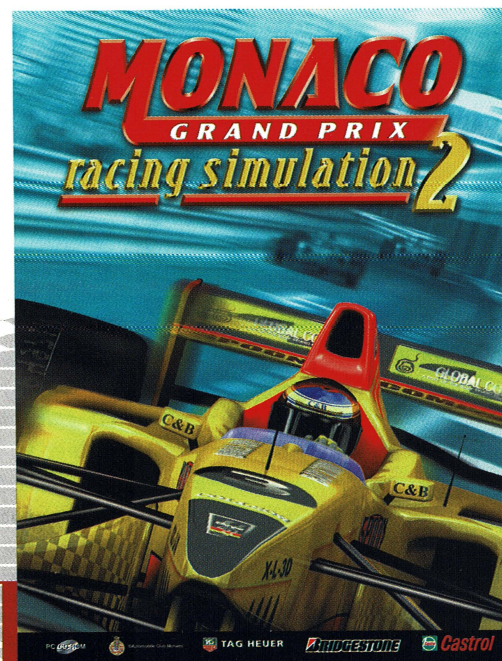
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# **FOR THE RUS**



# Tom's new toy

In his desire to push Hasbro Interactive further up the publisher rankings, president Tom Dusenberry recently splashed out \$70 million on MicroProse. Now he has to work out what to do with it. **Dave Roberts** reports...

**BOTH HASBRO** and MicroProse have been dancing the dance for some time, tippy-toeing their way through the consolidation waltz, but never with quite the right partner.

MicroProse, in fact, recently moved into They Shoot Horses territory - having been up for sale almost as long as poor old Virgin Interactive. It seemed to have struck lucky but ended up striking out when a deal with GT Interactive was announced almost exactly a year ago, only for the proposed union to fall apart amidst unpleasant allegations from both sides.

Curious accounting practices and questionable sales projections seemed to be at the heart of the problem. A close brush with THQ followed soon after but, again, led to nothing.

Acquisition, meanwhile, was always part of Hasbro Interactive's plan. Indeed it is part of the parent company's corporate culture. The toy giant started as a relatively small family business and then expanded dramatically during the late seventies and early eighties - a period in which it bought around 40 businesses.

Earlier this year, Hasbro's four year old entertainment software division looked to continue the tradition through the purchase of, who else, Virgin. It turned out, however, to be another deal that collapsed in the home stretch.

Tom Dusenberry, who has been president of Hasbro Interactive since its formation, isn't keen to



**DUSENBERRY:** More acquisitions could follow

go into detail about either party's history of near misses, saying only that a major purchase designed to bolster both product flow and distribution strength was always part of Hasbro's games market strategy.

"We have looked at every acquisition opportunity that has come up over the last couple of years - some several times," he says.

The possibility of buying MicroProse was first examined in late '97. "It came back on our radar screen around the time of E3 and since then we've moved pretty quickly and quite smoothly to get the deal done."

He describes pre-Prose Hasbro as "a virtual publisher: no internal development resource and, in Europe, no significant infrastructure."

Nevertheless, the firm had made its mark in gaming,

particularly in the US where it is consistently one of the top five publishers on PC and, according to Dusenberry, is also knocking on the door of the top 10 console players.

In Europe, Hasbro's market share figures have been less impressive, although it has enjoyed some long burn hits with titles such as Monopoly.

The disparity between success levels on either side of the Atlantic is easily explained by the quite dramatically different nature of the two markets, particularly the PC sector. In the American games market, family isn't a dirty word but a recognised product category, one that Hasbro dominates.

Given the product mix that it has had to work with, the international division has done well to lift revenues as high as the \$40 million+ predicted for the

current calendar year.

Its efforts to break into the enthusiasts market, however, have been disappointing. Frogger did little in Europe (although sales were huge in the US) and Hedz, despite being developed by the highly rated Viz team and garnering some critical praise, has failed to make much of an impact.

A desire to extend its reach across the boundaries of genre and geography were at the heart of Hasbro's decision to bolt-on Prose.

Dusenberry recounts: "They're legendary for having more Hall of Fame brands and franchises than any other games publisher - and we think we work pretty well nurturing and maximising big brands. They've also, obviously, got a strong European business. The standard split for companies like Electronic Arts and GT Interactive is 60:40 US to international. MicroProse's ratio was the other way round, so they obviously have a very strong set-up in Europe."

There is also precious little product crossover, with Prose specialising in very sophisticated, sometimes even arcane titles, aimed squarely at the experienced player - its roster reflecting a philosophy that's almost the antithesis of Hasbro's games-for-all approach.

Dusenberry interprets the contrast as an ideal marriage of opposites rather than a culture clash waiting to happen: "Make no mistake, we always coveted the hardcore gamer business. That's where the action is. These guys play intensely for four to six weeks and then make another purchase, they're active consumers. In Europe they represent the majority of the audience and so we could either target them aggressively or wait for the market to change to suit our line-up. We're not into waiting."

"I want us to be the best games company in the world. That couldn't be achieved whilst we were only competing in half the marketplace. We still believe that

## The Brand Strategy

Post-merger, Hasbro has split its entertainment software operation into three distinct business units defined by product strategy. And here's a neat little guide to them...

### Hasbro Interactive



(certainly from a US point of view) and heavily brand-orientated.

Attacking the family and children categories, PC-driven, mass market

### Atari

Led by one of the classic video game brands, cleverly acquired in March of this year. Initially focused on console but with plans to roll out to PC. Heavy investment in software development and subsequent marketing. Targeting 10-24 year old male gamer. Will feature both retro games and new concepts.

### MicroProse

Basically the veteran publisher backed by Hasbro's management and marketing. Heavily focused on PC. Simulations, strategy and role-playing games a speciality. Sophisticated products with strong appeal amongst hardcore gamers. Expect some of the company's classic old games to be revamped.



what we now call the casual gamer will end up being the motherload, the true mainstream, but we also want to compete in every single sector - and MicroProse takes us right to the heart of areas such as simulation, strategy and role-playing. The one area we're still absent from is sports."

Room for another acquisition? "Don't rule it out," says Dusenberry.

Coming at the deal from the MicroProse side of the fence, Tim Christian is obviously relieved to be free from the corporate uncertainty that had begun to severely dent both commercial progress and internal morale.

He's also extremely pleased and not a little surprised to be heading up the new group's international business (his opposite number at Hasbro, Barry Jafrato, has taken a new, global, content-focused role). "When I heard it was a done deal my first reaction was, 'they've got a good guy already, to the victor the spoils, point me at the ski slopes'."

Instead, Christian finds himself facing a new challenge - and a tough task. Some aspects of the merger (indeed, of any merger) will be difficult. There will be redundancies, possibly more than 80, from the sales, marketing and finance divisions at MicroProse's former corporate HQ in the US, which will be kept alive purely as a development resource.

In Europe, maybe 20-30 jobs will go. In France the situation's

**"We still believe that what we now call the casual gamer will end up being the motherload, the true mainstream, but we also want to compete in every single sector."**

simple. Hasbro has a division, MicroProse doesn't. No overlap, no redundancies. In Germany, Hasbro's relatively small Hamburg office will be absorbed into MicroProse's long-established Bielefeld facility, causing a handful of casualties in the process.

In the UK, where both companies have their main European HQs, the MicroProse site in Chipping Sodbury, mirroring the Stateside experience, will become a development division whilst the current Hasbro Interactive team will move out of its current corner of the toy company's Stockley Park building and into a dedicated London office.

It's quite complicated and there's bound to be a bit of pain even when small cuts are made but, Christian points out, it's still the best solution to what had become a hellish problem.

"It was getting increasingly difficult and we all wanted, needed, some sort of resolution. One of the principle failings of MicroProse was that there was never enough product coming

through. The development side was too erratic and too costly and the lack of new releases, the lifeblood of the industry, was creating a malaise within the company.

"We obviously knew that the writing had been on the wall for some time, but we also knew that when you're talking about a company with our heritage and a creative team that, if well managed, has still got huge potential, the most likely outcome would be a white knight - and that turned out to be Hasbro."

Asked to pinpoint the major plus points of Prose's new parent, Christian echoes Dusenberry's comments on complementary strengths but also, perhaps significantly, states that "they seem to have a very competent and professional US team".

MicroProse's sporadic European successes, most notably the golden period between summer 1995 and autumn 1996, were never capitalised on chiefly because, as Christian now admits, "our victories were always counterpointed by an American operation that was struggling."

Whilst the differences between Hasbro and MicroProse can be interpreted as conducive to a good fit, their one outstanding similarity is a problem. Neither has ever managed to crack the console market.

It's a goal very much in Dusenberry's sights: "We're already a leading PC company in the US, with MicroProse on board we're now in or close to the top five in Europe, but we've still got quite some way to go globally on console. I absolutely want us to be a major, major player in video games. Like I say, we want to compete in every market sector and on every viable format."

And, again, Dusenberry confirms that "acquisition is definitely a way to go" towards that target.

He predicts that, with Prose in the mix for the final quarter, Hasbro's 1998 revenues will hit \$250 million. And he says he'll be "very disappointed" if they didn't climb by another 50 per cent next year.

## Head-to-Head

### HASBRO

Global revenues\*: \$200 million

US: Int. sales split: 75:25

Worldwide headcount  
150 (100 in US)

#### Key Franchises

Wide range of classic toy lines and board games, including Monopoly, Risk, Cluedo, Trivial Pursuit, Tonka and, er, My Little Pony

#### Biggest hit to date

Monopoly (Released 1995. Global sales of PC version stand at 1.4m)

#### Forthcoming attractions

Glover (PC, N64) Centipede (PC, PlayStation), both due in November

#### Development

No in-house resources

#### Global CEO

Tom Dusenberry, still at the helm

#### International boss

Barry Jafrato, now in charge of content strategy as senior vp, global business development

### MICROPROSE

Global revenues\*: \$85 million

US: Int. sales split: 40:60

Worldwide headcount  
450 (325 in US)

#### Key Franchises

Grand Prix, Civilization, X-Com, Falcon

#### Biggest hit to date

Grand Prix 2 (Released on PC, 1996. Global sales of 1.3m)

#### Forthcoming attractions

Falcon 4.0 (PC), due this Christmas

#### Development

Creative staff of 220 split between four sites (three US, one UK). Also long term publishing deal with Worms developer Team 17

#### Global CEO

Steve Race, due to depart within the next month or so.

#### International boss

Tim Christian, fulfilling same role in newly combined unit

\*Revenue figures are estimates for calendar year 1998, taking no account of the input from the other party.

## Barry Goes Shopping



Hasbro hasn't finished with the chequebook yet, not by a long chalk. Evidence of this is the appointment of Hasbro Interactive's pre-merger international boss Barry Jafrato as senior vice president of global business development. It's a crucial job and a return to Jafrato's specialist subject and first love - product.

"It's a very broad role, but to turn our company into a billion dollar business we are going to need a lot of products," Jafrato explains. "These

can come from several areas, such as the development of existing intellectual properties like Monopoly and Risk. We have to ensure that they are always refreshed at the appropriate time and extended beyond their initial play pattern.

"Then there's licences. Hasbro has a lot of relationships with Hollywood and we want to combine our efforts with the main toy group, like we did with Small Soldiers, and become a player in the movie/entertainment-based business.

"And as far as original content goes, we will always be part of the mix - things like Glover and Hedz are just the start. Now that we're in the strategy arena, we want more originals in that genre as well."

He adds that (surprise, surprise) he will be looking at acquisition opportunities, big and small, in both the development and publishing fields.





# After the anoraks

We all know things have changed. Selling games isn't just about cute kids and core markets any more. It's about an ever shifting consumer target. But how are Sony, Nintendo, even Sega, setting about hitting it? **Geoff Glendenning** reports...

## **That Dance Culture Thing**

Over the last ten years the UK has experienced a revolutionary social change which has created one of the toughest marketing battlegrounds in the world.

To say that a synthesised and sampled musical genre is responsible for this change may seem a little far-fetched. But it is abundantly clear that the rise-and-rise of British dance culture combined with the media explosion, has created a hip, media-literate and ultimately cynical marketing audience, where age has become a state of mind and lifestyle influences can stretch across a vast range of ages.

Dance culture introduced a key element to the way British youth interacted socially which had been lacking from previous generations.

This element was the feeling of unity, shared with people from all

different walks of life.

The music created and cemented this unity. Millions of people experienced a new kind of music, which made no judgement. It made no social observations and wasn't political. It didn't distinguish because it was simply there to be experienced.

From the seed planted by Acid House almost fifteen years ago, there has been a dance music explosion, creating a clubbing nation where 39 per cent of 18-25 year olds go clubbing every week. Whilst the original Ravers may have had to tone down their clubbing habits with age, the original attitude and outlook on life still remain with them. If we take dance music as a key point for youth culture, its diversification across age, sex, class and race has given a whole new complexity to the term youth marketing.

For youth marketing is no longer a simple term associated with targeting a young audience. It is a term we can now break down into three target groups; youth 8-15, middle youth 16-25 and old youth 26... when you wake up one morning and realise that you are just plain old.

The key implication to marketing a lifestyle associated product in the UK, is that there now exists a market that has many common influences on their lifestyles and interests.

This means that you can launch a product with a core brand position, targeting the opinion-formers and influencers of this market, with a single brand position, which can appeal to a market ranging in age from 8-40 years. In marketing today there is a high level of unaccountability. Marketers can carry on putting out text book support for their

products, but when it comes to the crunch unless you have an understanding of what is often referred to as the 'chemical generation', you will be struggling to create effective campaigns.

## **The Cynical Punter**

It is also important to consider the effects of the media explosion over the last ten years. As people's lifestyles have changed with the explosion of dance culture, so the media has expanded to feed the consumers hunger for more information about their lifestyle influences.

As the media grows, so does the advertising revenue. Companies are forced to spend bigger budgets across a growing range of media and on production budgets that are growing continuously to feed the growing cynicism of consumers bombarded for most of



their lives with images of lifestyles they are supposed to aspire to.

So we have this huge market out there waiting to spend their money on our products but they won't be an easy pushover, unless you follow this simple formula; get a good product, get it endorsed by the right people, choose the right associations, create word of mouth and finally, support it all with unpatronising, honest creative marketing that speaks in the right language.

This formula does work. It is exactly what was applied at Sony and although there are always a few inconsistencies in any marketing, it was the strategy to position PlayStation in line with the social changes in the UK that have demonstrated - through inarguable success - the importance of recognising the influences on our market.

During the run up to the launch in 1995 we spent six months creating the word of mouth for PlayStation. The snowball effect from this early work by Sony and those publishers who recognised the opportunity for taking their product to market with the same simple formula, is significant in understanding the way our consumers think. The effectiveness of Sony's word of mouth demonstrated, without a doubt, the level of media literacy and cynicism that exists in the UK. Clever UK advertising agencies realised this was happening about five years ago.

Others have simply got fat in their marble clad offices around Soho for a couple of decades and I'm really glad to see they are getting into trouble with youth marketing.

The usual campaign of TV (the longer spot length the better), Posters (96-sheet and as many of them as possible), press ads (they must be consumer-only double page spreads) and maybe radio (but that's always a bit tough to come up with a good execution for) is no longer as effective as it was ten years ago. Nowhere near.

## Advertising Angst

The video games consumer is making a much more educated purchase decision and they base their decision on a lot of information from many different sources.

Consumer advertising is still an essential part of many campaigns, but only a part, and therefore the millions that we as an industry

have been persuaded to part with over the last few years, with hindsight of course, could well have been spent better.

The main problem is that no one knows just how effective our advertising is, apart from perhaps if you have an offer associated with a specific media which allows you to monitor the response.

There are on-going research studies to find out what people watch and read or if they saw a certain advert. In the UK there are boxes in 4,400 homes that record what a cross-section of our society watch, these figures are then multiplied up to take into consideration that there are 22 million homes in the UK.

The problem, clearly, is that the research a company carries out in order to find out if people like its

the consequent broadening of the market and the huge amount of software available, the entertainment software market is faced with one of the most difficult marketing tasks in the world.

Recently departed Psygnosis co-founder Ian Hetherington criticised the industry's quality of marketing earlier this summer. In some cases I would agree, especially when most marketing is fairly unaccountable.

But in my opinion the main problems start about half way through a game's development. It is around this time that the developer may suddenly realise that the game is not going to live up to expectations, but too much has been spent already so the development will have to continue. It is also at this time the

caused by piracy when gold discs get on to the market.

## Trial By Television

This Christmas we will see the biggest marketing spend the industry has ever seen. If Sony continues its support of PlayStation publishers, with financial support on TV along with the moneyback incentive to publishers who achieve a TV campaign weight of 50 TVRs, then there will be no getting away from messages from the world's leading video games system over the next few months.

Although its blanket TV support adds weight to the PlayStation message, Sony could confuse its core brand message. By putting the Sony commercial signature end-frames on everyone's commercials, it loses creative control, which might have been a different story if a separate publishers end frame was introduced.

Sony has thrown down the gauntlet to Nintendo with the recent price drop, supported with a big marketing commitment. The new brand campaign is a big improvement on the 1997 'symbols' work which was a typical example of the advertising industry's exaggeration of brand and product messages.

The new campaign is much more focused to the UK market. The casting and script perfectly reflect current lifestyle and attitudes by not talking down to the audience but instead making them feel involved. That is, right up until the point when the bloke says: '...at least I can say I have lived.'

For those Simpsons fans out there, you know what I mean when I say the commercial goes a bit 'Mr Plough' at the end.

[continued on page 22]

**To create the maximum hype, games companies need to have the full game ready 4-6 weeks before launch. Demos are not enough**

campaign, is done with small groups and then the feedback is generally what they expected anyway. An 85 per cent awareness of your advertising amongst your target audience, does not necessarily mean the market as whole likes it.

## The Luvvie Factor

This all leads to another significant change and that is the importance of public relations.

As stated, the consumers are all growing cynical and don't believe advertising as much as they used to, so who is in a prime position to reap the rewards; the bloody luvvie-darling brigade of course.

Yes, many PR agencies still live in an AbFab world, but there are also many out there who have recognised the changes and are offering extremely creative support for youth brands.

## Rushed & Useless

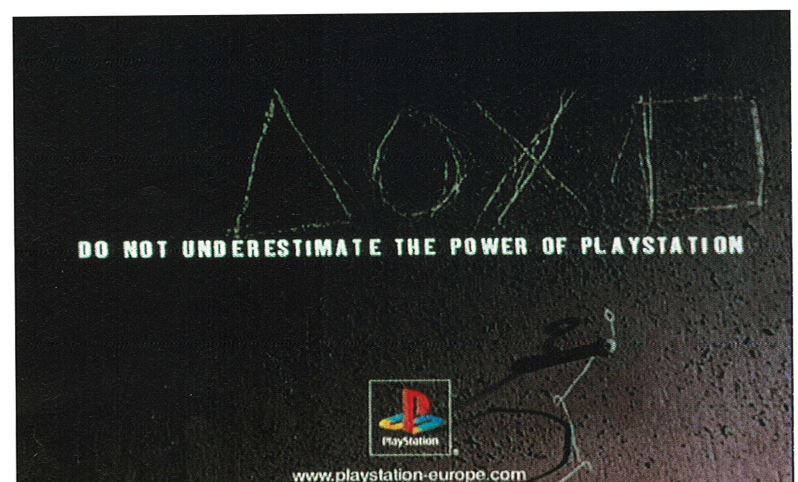
The responsibility of the marketing staff currently working within the games industry is to put together a comprehensive campaign that covers all possible angles. They must gain acceptance for their products and marketing within their target market's environment.

With the success of PlayStation,

marketing team needs to be involved.

Unfortunately, in many cases the people who have to work out how to sell the damn product once it is completed get far too little input. The closer to the launchdate the marketing begins, the less effective it will be. The only time this is not as important, is if the game is undoubtedly a must-have.

One of the main influences the marketing team's involvement can have would be to change the timing on the availability of promotional copies. To create the maximum hype, games companies need to have the full game ready 4-6 weeks before launch. Demos are not enough and we have seen the damage



Sony, and its third parties, will be all over the TV again this Christmas



(continued from page 21)

## Killer or Filler?

**S**ony's Christmas strategy is spot on. By dropping the price and going big on TV with a brand and price campaign early, it could well snap up a huge proportion of the gift purchases before Nintendo realises what is happening.

The number of publishers on TV will support the PlayStation's hardware proposition but it will also highlight the biggest problem for the industry this Christmas - the overwhelming amount of software available on PlayStation.

The market is flooded with software titles all fighting for a limited pot of money. I know

who cleverly took the industry to Dublin for the week, presented all their information to a captive audience and then got them very pissed.

Interestingly, this 'offsite' trade marketing strategy has become increasingly popular in the music business - the last major to hold a big product conference being... Sony.

## Younger & Older

**N**intendo's marketing strategy from the start with N64 has been to target a younger market in the hope of grabbing its traditional audience.

The only problem with that was the dads loved PlayStation and

titles appearing pre-Christmas - such as Zelda, the Turok sequel, 1080 Snowboarding and F-Zero - and, of course, that essential price drop, Sony knows that it is in for a fight. It wouldn't expect anything less.

## Sega's Return

**A**nd whilst the battle rages between Sony and Nintendo through the last third of another year, the hype is already beginning to build for Sega's Dreamcast machine - due in Europe by next September.

Sega knows exactly what it did wrong last time out with Saturn. It has a machine with a specification which is creating a lot of excitement among the software development community and it has the money and experience to storm back onto the market.

Of course it is early days to say whether Sega will actually be able to make a comeback or not, because in order to form that opinion we need to see the software - some of which is due to be unveiled at the Tokyo Game Show next week.

It feels like we've waited a long time, but showing games too early would have risked diluting the impact of Dreamcast in Japan - where launch, already pushed back, had been set

for the very end of November at press time.

One of the starts of the Tokyo show will be Sonic. A new game is being demonstrated, but Sega claims that this will be positioned as just another software title and any previous mascot associations will be avoided.

It knows, however, that a pillar Sonic game is what everyone expects - trade and consumers alike. It is also an obvious choice for demos, because it won't be giving any secrets away whilst still showing the gameplay and graphical capability of the machine.

Sega has also recognised the changing European market and has signed a series of deals with proven and potential-packed companies in order to guarantee development of games which will hopefully have the same impact that the Sony/Psygnosis line-up offered when the PlayStation was launched in Europe three years ago.

Having seen the success of Sony's strategy, Sega knows that the market conditions are for a similar-style launch. As long as it spends both time and money creating a huge pre-launch hype, it could severely upset the market before the hardware follow-up to PlayStation gets a chance to complete Sony's long term market domination.

Even without seeing much to date, most of us

would bet on Sega having a superb range of launch software for Dreamcast and a powerful marketing punch. Recent appointments, such as Philip Ley's Branded agency and new UK marketing director Giles Thomas (hired from MTV no less) are proof that the company is thinking big.

And there are more announcements to come as the Japanese giant rebuilds its European infrastructure.

But does a three-way format battle in 1999 necessarily mean even bigger marketing spends?

Probably.

Formerly head of marketing for Sony Computer Entertainment UK, Geoff Glendenning is now a partner at integrated marketing agency Third Planet International. Tel: 0181 968 8468.

## Having seen the success of Sony's strategy, Sega knows that market conditions are perfect for a similar-style launch

Christmas is traditionally the best time of the year for sales, but it is also guaranteed that a certain few titles will take the bulk.

With the rental scheme and the quality (and increasing quantity) of titles within the Platinum range there are sure ways for the consumer to try new games or buy superb, slightly older but not outdated, games.

This puts even more pressure on publishers who in many cases would be better off either delaying a launch to create some hype for the post-Christmas granny money - launching between April and September, spending less time and money supporting a poor quality title that doesn't stand a chance, or even putting poor quality titles straight to rental where they can earn money and allow more focus on your other games.

Sony Computer Entertainment UK's managing director Ray Maguire recently played down this problem by referring to 'pillar, killer & filler' titles appealing to different people.

This problem of over-supply was very apparent at last month's ECTS trade event which, in my mind, failed to provide much share of voice for anything but the biggest titles.

With most visitors able to spend only one day at the show, many software publishers will have to follow a similar strategy to publishers such as Activision,

many mums were not far behind - once they'd been forced to play Soulblade and unexpectedly got into being a warrior Queen intent on blood lust, families even started to budget for games.

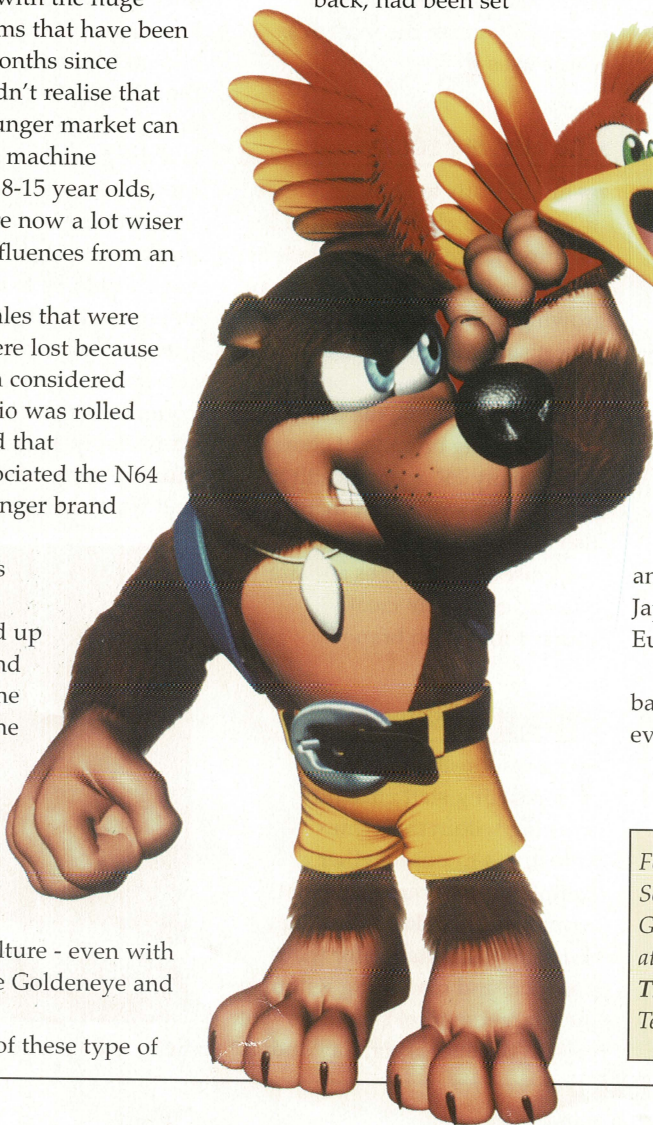
Nintendo's strategy should have worked and, of course, has - you can't argue with the huge number of systems that have been sold in just 18 months since launch. But it didn't realise that although the younger market can support a games machine appealing to the 8-15 year olds, kids generally are now a lot wiser and take their influences from an older position.

For all those sales that were gained, many were lost because the N64 has been considered 'too' young. Mario was rolled out at launch and that immediately associated the N64 with a much younger brand position.

The lead games appearing for the system have lived up to expectations and many appeal to the same market as the PlayStation.

Unfortunately, the N64 has so far failed to create much of an impact on popular youth culture - even with superb games like Goldeneye and Turok.

But with more of these type of





Kunio Neo is...

# Geared up for growth

**THE BAD NEWS IS** that Metal Gear Solid won't make Christmas. Think Easter instead.

The good news, according to Euro boss Kunio Neo, is that Konami will do fine without it.

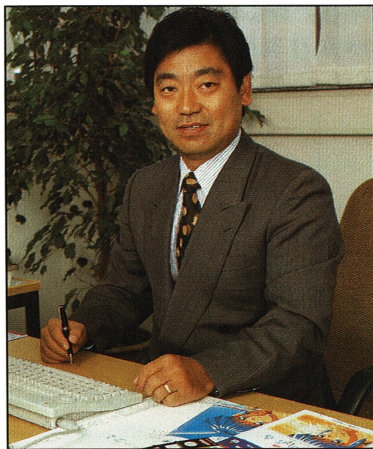
Today, for instance, it launches the second SKU of what will be a million-seller. In fact, the PlayStation version of ISS '98 could hit seven figures on its own, add in N64 sales and you're looking at over 1.5m lifetime.

This will help push Euro revenues to record levels, over £70m this year.

The delay on Metal Gear might even be beneficial, argues Neo: "Sony will ship millions of units of PlayStation this Christmas and so the installed base in the first quarter of '99 will be larger and more active than ever before."

When Neo arrived in Europe in 1995 Konami, along with much of the industry, was in crisis. "We had grown fat and couldn't support the organisation once the 16-bit business crashed."

His first task was to reduce the



Euro headcount by around 30 per cent to just 35 people

"But it wasn't just a question of structure, it was also about attitude. We, and many others in the industry, had it too easy for too long. The demand from retailers and consumers was seen as automatic and taken for granted. We had to learn to fight for success."

That has come most notably in the ISS series, probably the most critically acclaimed football franchise in the business - and

closing the gap on EA's FIFA.

"They have two big advantages: the FIFA name and the fact that they publish on PC."

Neo believes that as well as the tangible increase in sales, one of his major achievements has been to provide a successful bridge between the culture of a Japanese company and the demands of the European marketplace.

He considers Europe, specifically Germany (Konami's local HQ is in Frankfurt), to be his home and fights his battles with the conviction of a long term team captain rather than a half-hearted fifth columnist.

One of his most important victories has been to increase the volume and speed of information disseminating from Japan. He admits that, in the past, Europe has languished in the lower reaches of Konami's agenda but now, generating 25 per cent of the consumer division's global revenues, the territory is being afforded more respect and co-operation than ever before.

## Biography

### 1971

Graduates from Chuo University, Japan. Joins consumer audio firm Crown.

### 1974

Moves to Germany as Crown's head of international sales and marketing.

### 1980

Back to Japan for senior role within consumer audio OEM specialist Kisho. New position involves developing overseas business. Relationships are forged with leading European retailers such as Karstadt and Dixons.

### 1993

Enters games business as general manager of international division. As at Kisho, Neo is based in Japan but controls overseas markets.

### 1995-Present

Moves to Germany as head of Konami's European division, with responsibilities extended to include the Middle East, Africa and Australasia.

## GamesPeople

Sales, Marketing & PR

### UK Marketing Manager

£35 - 45,000 + car  
London

If proof was needed that the UK is the place for games development, this is it! One of the most respected Japanese software developers is establishing a London base, and a key objective is to find a skilled, high profile marketing manager to boost awareness of the company and its products. The right person will be given lots of autonomy.

### QA Manager

£30-35,000  
London

A prominent software developer is looking for someone strong on QA procedures to set up and manage a quality assurance department from scratch. You would be a key player in their busy development programme, ensuring that products are perfect by the time they get to market. You must be good on detail and comfortable with tight deadlines.

### Sales Order Processing

£20,000  
London

There's a real buzz about this place. One of the top 'Britsoft' developers is looking for an addition to their young team who will take care of all sales and purchase order processing. Frequent use of their computer system calls for PC literacy and a working knowledge of Microsoft Word, giving you a great perspective on their business.

### Project Manager

£20-25,000  
East Anglia

Based in a city where they live and breathe technology, this prominent software producer is looking for a manager to help localise their product range. The role calls for a high level of organisation and a strong, cheerful personality as you would be dealing with clients worldwide. You'll also need a good understanding of the games industry.

### Localisation Manager

£25-28,000  
London

This very well-established software publisher is seeking someone, ideally with previous localisation experience, to tune their product range to individual markets throughout Europe and the US. Though a games background isn't vital, you'll need to quickly assimilate different needs and manage them into effective action.

### Technical Support

£16-20,000  
Home Counties

A dream role for a gamer! A multimedia peripherals company needs someone who understands PC products in depth to help with customer queries and technical support. You won't need previous industry experience so it's a great way in, but you must be able to communicate your knowledge clearly and effectively.

### National Accounts Manager

£25-28,000 + car;  
OTE £30,000  
London

Can you bring experience of selling to major retail accounts nationwide? Our client offers a varied and exciting range of multimedia products and is looking for a motivated self-starter to fill the role of national accounts manager. They are ambitious to expand their current base, so the ability to prise open new distribution channels is key.

### Product Manager

£25,000 + company benefits  
London

This UK games publisher, very big internationally, has some of the most exciting technology around. They want to stay out front, so there is a vacancy for a seasoned marketing professional to 'champion' a portfolio of titles. The role will include planning major initiatives and actioning them both internally and through outside agencies.

### European PR Manager

£35,000 + car + company benefits  
London

The name alone should open doors! An international children's brand is launching numerous titles at the end of the year, and their interactive software arm is looking for a strategic PR thinker to take on the challenge Europe-wide. You'll be London-based and will need experience of working for other blue-chip companies.

### OEM/Licensing Manager

£35,000; OTE £50,000  
Home Counties

Our client is at the forefront of games technology, producing brilliant 3D graphics for PC and PS-X platforms. They are seeking someone with at least 3 years international experience in OEM computer products to develop this side of their business. You'll be responsible for forging relationships with publishers through licensing and OEM deals.

### PR Manager

£30,000 + car + company benefits  
Home Counties

If you have a first class track record in the PR industry, or in an agency, this could be a wise career move. Our client is an exciting and successful UK games development studio with a vacancy for a PR manager at their south of London location. The successful candidate will take charge of strategic planning for campaigns across Europe.

### Trade Marketing Manager

£25-35,000  
Midlands

Our client is one of the most successful developers and publishers of interactive software around the world, with a number of current top-sellers. They are seeking a senior-level trade marketing manager, with experience in the games industry, to take forward their relationships with the UK retail trade.

### International Brand Manager

£25,000  
Midlands

Only founded in 1986, this UK games developer aims to reach £50m in turnover next year. Achieving their goal means a co-ordinated international sales and marketing offensive and to support this they need a skilled marketer from within the industry to create and implement marketing plans for all their brands.

### Licensing Manager

£25-40,000 + car  
Midlands

This high-profile games producer, strong in sporting titles, wishes to expand licensing opportunities for its growing portfolio. You'll be expected to identify prospects in areas such as film, TV, sports and celebrity endorsements and be experienced enough to negotiate tight deals. You must be a graduate and have previous licensing experience.

### Marketing Manager

£35,000 + profit related bonus  
North

Magazine publishing is all about working to tight deadlines in a highly-competitive environment, and the marketing side is no different. Our client is looking for someone with strong brand-building and management skills to fit into their culture. If you are a good, 'hands-on' professional this will be an appropriate challenge.

### Please contact on

Malsara in complete confidence  
Tel 0171 580 6018 Fax 0171 580 6068

### or send your CV to

Datascope Recruitment  
104 Great Portland Street  
London W1N 5PE

Email [info@datascope.co.uk](mailto:info@datascope.co.uk)

Website [www.datascope.co.uk/datascope/](http://www.datascope.co.uk/datascope/)

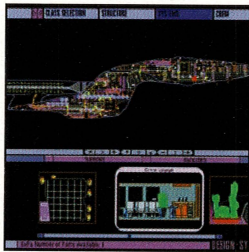
**DATASCOPE**  
RECRUITMENT



The products continue to come thick and fast in the education, reference, lifestyle and utility sector. This week MCV puts the trade marketing spotlight on a quartet from Zablac, Helicon, Law Pack Publishing and Magix...

### Star Trek: Starship Creator

Available: **October**  
Supplier: **Zablac Entertainment**  
Tel: **01626 332233**  
Price: **£34.99**



**ZABLAC'S STARSHIP** Creator allows users to design their own unique Star Trek ships by mixing and matching parts from 10 different ship classes including the Enterprise and Voyager.

The ships can then be named, staffed and sent on missions whose outcome depends on the choices made in ship design, personnel and decisions taken at key moments.

Users can also design their own missions and trade ships over the Internet.

Press ads will appear in Star Trek Monthly and the usual mix of specialist PC magazines.

### Knowledge Adventure Value

Available: **This Month**  
Supplier: **Software Partners**  
Tel: **01480 466111**  
Price: **£12.99**



**SOFTWARE PARTNERS** is lining up a new budget range of educational titles, each retailing at £9.99 in jewel case format or £12.99 boxed.

Taken from Cendant's back catalogue of Knowledge Adventure titles, the range includes Dr. Brain, Casper Brainy Book, Starting School and Mega Maths Blaster and is aimed at children aged 4-12.

Further titles will join the range before Christmas, including Bricks, Mixed Up Mother Goose, Fairy Tale-A True Story, Professor Tim's Incredible Machine and Reading Blaster Junior.

### LawPack Software Range

Available: **Now**  
Supplier: **Law Pack Publishing**  
Tel: **0171 357 0367**  
Price: **£9.99**



**DESIGNED TO PROMOTE** legal self-help, the new LawPack Software range features a variety of ready made forms, letters and agreements dealing with common legal situations.

It comprises nine CD-ROMs retailing at £9.99 each, which are designed to be easy to use for both personal and business users.

Included in the selection currently on offer are Staff Management, Recruitment, Buying and Selling, Family Lawyer and Finance & Credit.

Marketing will include POS for retailers, plus a trade and consumer PR campaign.

### Magix Music Maker V2000

Available: **Now**  
Supplier: **Magix**  
Tel: **0171 917 2897**  
Price: **£39.99**



**MUSIC MAKER V2000** by Magix features a 16-track sequencer allowing beginners to create their own musical compositions.

Using drag and drop PC techniques, music can be composed from more than 1,000 existing samples or created by the user using the record feature.

Video and graphic creation is also possible with over 600 files available. A Deluxe version will also be available.

The product will be backed by ads in the specialist press such as PC Format, direct mailing and POS - including posters, flyers and Magix range displays.



## want to break the rules?

cruise control needs unconventional people to work within a dynamic marketing & pr agency.

we have a growing list of youth market clients ranging from games publishers to drinks brands.

if you love games and think you can add to the anarchy contact chris birch:

### **cruise control**

697 Harrow Road  
London  
NW10 5NY

t: 0181 960 8606

f: 0181 960 4596

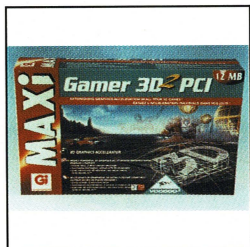
e: [chris@cruisecontrol.uk.com](mailto:chris@cruisecontrol.uk.com)



MCV continues its support of the increasingly important peripherals and plug-ins market, offering our thousands of retail readers invaluable product and marketing info. This week, eight more arrivals battle for shelfspace...

## Maxi Gamer 3D2 PCI

Available: **Now**  
Supplier: **Guillemot**  
Tel: **0181 944 1940**  
Price: **£139.99**



**GUILLEMOT RELAUNCHES** its PC graphics accelerator card based on the second generation Voodoo 2 3Dfx chip-set this month at a greatly reduced price point.

Designed to work alongside a user's existing 2D card, Guillemot's second generation card boasts speeds of up to 100 frames per second, higher screen resolutions, a faster clock frequency, 12Mb of memory and special effects such as bi-linear and tri-linear filtering.

Two Voodoo 2 boards can be installed in a single PC for enhanced performance.

Specialist and trade ads.

## Aftershock Steering Wheel

Available: **November**  
Supplier: **ASCII**  
Tel: **01923 202097**  
Price: **£59.99**



**ARRIVING IN NOVEMBER,** The Aftershock wheel will feature analogue steering with force feedback and comes complete with a set of foot pedals.

The feedback is provided by two different size motors, giving the user two distinct sets of vibrations. Sony Analogue and Sony Dual Shock mode are available and the wheel can be attached to a table top via suction pads.

Ads will be placed in the November and December issues of Official Playstation Magazine, Playstation Plus and Total Playstation while quarter page ads will continue through to February '99.

## Scepter LCD

Available: **This Month**  
Supplier: **Suncom**  
Tel: **01285 642211**  
Price: **£75**



**SUNCOM'S SCEPTER LCD** features 24 programmable buttons, which allows it to be used with all PC games.

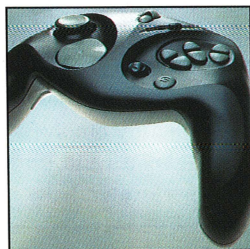
Touch 'n' Go technology allows the user to easily program all buttons and allows for up to 480 different game commands to be saved and recalled in onboard memory.

An LCD display provides information on what functions have been customised and the stick also features Digital/Optical technology.

Marketing is likely to include advertising in the specialist press. Suncom will also continue its strong support of the indie sector.

## Gravis Xterminator

Available: **Now**  
Supplier: **Koch Media**  
Tel: **01256 707767**  
Price: **£49.99**



**THE XTERMINATOR** features separate analogue and digital control in a single PC joystick.

Allow total customisation through 19 fully programmable controls, the pad features six primary buttons, two digital triggers, two shoulder buttons, a throttle and an eight-way Point-of-View switch.

The pad also features a Hot Set Switch allowing complicated key combinations to be accessed from a single button, and a two player connector is built into the unit for multi-player gaming.

Full colour flyers will be available at retail, along with other promotional effort from distributor Koch Media.

## Primal Pad

Available: **This month**  
Supplier: **Wild Things**  
Tel: **01222 755774**  
Price: **£24.99**



**WILD THINGS** launches its Playstation Dual Analogue joystick featuring Dual Shock capability this month as part of its ever-expanding range of peripherals.

The Primal pad includes slow motion and independent turbo fire features, as well as the standard PlayStation pad button configuration.

The pad is uniquely styled, which ensures it has a distinctive presence at retail. The Primal pad will be available in a Black Ice finish and will be backed by ads in the specialist press.

Appealing design and strong trade promotions will help this useful PlayStation arrival.

## Army Camouflage Light Gun

Available: **This month**  
Supplier: **Joytech**  
Tel: **01525 371 769**  
Price: **£34.99**



**JOYTECH HAS RE-STYLED** its best selling Real Arcade Gun to produce the new Army Camouflage Light Gun for the Playstation.

Compatible with all light gun games such as Die Hard Trilogy and Point Blank, it features automatic recoil action and a foot pedal for re-loading.

For those who like their shooting action with the minimum of disruption, auto reload and auto fire functions are also included.

The new gun will come packaged in an authentic ammo crate and will be backed by ads in the specialist press for three months up to Christmas.

## Formula Force GT

Available: **This month**  
Supplier: **Thrustmaster**  
Tel: **01276 609955**  
Price: **£139.99**



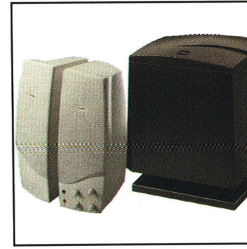
**THRUSTMASTER** releases its new I-Force technology force feedback wheel for the PC this month, available in USB and Serial Port formats.

Featuring a padded wheel with four buttons, paddles and a gear lever, the Force GT boasts two levels of vibration. The accelerator and brake pedals included have different degrees of tension and quick release clamps will attach the wheel to any desk.

Bundled with the wheel are five game demos, including Colin McRae Rally, and marketing will include promotions in the specialist press as well as ads in the trade and consumer press.

## APX-4620

Available: **November**  
Supplier: **Labtec**  
Tel: **01252 629900**  
Price: **£129.99**



**AS WELL AS DELIVERING** theatre quality audio, the APX 4620 delivers a total of 70watts RMS and offers several unique features to PC users.

Powered by five amplifiers in a tri-amp configuration, bass is provided by a floor-mounted subwoofer with two satellite speakers housing a tweeter and mid range drivers.

A 360-degree sound field is achieved through a Variable Spatialiser 3d Imaging system.

The speakers can be mounted on a monitor and advertising is already being planned in the specialist monthlies.

Labtec has strong PR support through Barrington Harvey.



# Go on then, say something nice

Many of you have written in telling us that you like our new trade title, and we thank you. It wouldn't do to publish all of the kind words, of course, but we particularly like the following selection of comments and wanted to share them with the world. Those who prefer to read complaints should only read the right hand side of this page...

I love the new mag. Feels great, content is great and the sections are a brilliant idea.

For as long as I can remember, MCV is the most informative publication I've seen for this business. Congratulations to the whole team.

**Debbie Bestwick**  
Team 17 Software  
debs@team17.com

Having visited ECTS and picked up the first issue of MCV, I have to say that the new magazine is extremely interesting - not that I was expecting less from the strong team that you have put together.

Best regards and good wishes with the new project.

**Andrea Minini Saldini**  
Official PlayStation Magazine  
gorman@ilmioweb.it

Great publication, keep it going as good!

**Pete Mortimer**  
Telegames  
www.telegames.co.uk

Now that's what I call a comprehensive trade publication!

It offers an incisive, detailed and well researched mix of news and features. There goes my Friday morning - nice manageable size too.

The editorial proposition should prove of great value to retail, and of course all the decision makers within the interactive entertainment business.

And no arse-licking, just facts. Nice one.

**Neil Critchlow**  
Rage Software  
n\_critchlow@live.rage.co.uk

Congratulations on a great launch. The right information, the right pitch. And there's no in-bred industry bullshit.

You've got my vote.

**Alan Dykes**  
PC Gaming World  
Alan\_Dykes@zd.com

Just a line to congratulate everyone at MCV on the recent birth of your new baby - a very healthy baby, may I add.

Love the lay-out, the gloss and, of course, the content.

**Ann Hurley**  
Gremlin Interactive  
AnnH@gremlin.co.uk

The new mag looks great. I've already switched allegiance.

**Steve Fountain**  
Mega News  
stevef@tcp.co.uk

I would like to congratulate you on a superb launch. I love the design, which is complemented by the informative and entertaining content.

Well done, you have just created another good reason to look forward to Fridays!

**Gary Bracey**  
Telstar Electronic Studios  
gary.bracey@telstar.co.uk

Great format, impressive Eidos scoop in your first issue - followed by many others in the past few weeks. The editorial positively shines with enthusiasm and market knowledge.

What a breath of fresh air. Perfect timing for a new approach to industry news, as we reach what I feel is an exciting time.

**Pete Hawley**  
GT Interactive Europe  
Phawley@gtinteractive.com

Congratulations on a great launch. Your mag is packed with stories and really user-friendly.

I like the territory updates, UK software revenues and all the boxes that help to break up the pages. But the best thing is the sheer amount of info in there.

I hope you can continue to keep up this level of editorial expertise every week.

**Damian Butt**  
Paragon Publishing  
gecko@www2.paragon.co.uk

## A minx writes

THIS IS JUST to register my extreme dismay at the photo of myself looking indisposed which you featured in your first issue (Hidden Camera - MCV 5/9).

I have a reputation to maintain, and the merest hint that I would even consider snogging Nick Wheelright will do my prospects (professional and personal) no good at all.

I trust, in the future, the only photos that will appear featuring me will make me look fabulous, nubile and desirable. A tall order I know, but I am sure journalists and photographers of your calibre will find this an exciting challenge.

Well done on the launch. MCV looks, feels and reads great.

**Allison Grant**  
Interplay  
agrant@interplay.com

## Plus points re-considered

SO MIKE ANDRIESZ hates the likes of Playstation Plus (Calm Down Boys - MCV 25/9). That's his prerogative.

Personally, it's not my choice of magazine when it comes to games coverage - but then, I'm not in its target market. Where he goes wrong is to assume that it is unprofessional and immature publishing. Why write in their defence? They probably couldn't be fucked responding - even if they did read the trade press.

Mike would have been squirming in his seat at last week's Emap Consumer Magazine awards bash, attended by 2,000 staff from 100+ magazines. Playstation Plus picked up two awards, including best magazine in the circulation range of 60-140,000.

Plus was up against some of the biggest Emap magazines to win this award, including Metro heavyweights Select and Neon.

The plain fact of the matter is that the Playstation Plus team were rewarded for a job well done. Little over a year ago, the title was a nonentity amongst consumer magazines and pretty much a non-performer. Now it is

bringing home the bacon big time, has set a market trend and is basking in the ire that its astonishingly puerile and insensitive editorial has provoked.

It's not accidental. Playstation Plus is not the product of bored under-developed hacks, chasing a 'mythical market' - its journalists and marketers are responding to a real, researched market, using sophisticated techniques to define it and then meticulously monitoring the output. The trick is that it's made to look effortless. Playstation Plus often looks like its been thrown together - but then so does John Paul Gaultier.

The fact I hate Plus means that it's doing its job right - it's not for late-20s online nerds for me who think jokes about Michael Hutchence's suicide are in poor taste. It's not for the endless supply of pontificating 'experts' or 'industry personalities' or trade paper readers.

It's for young men who don't take games seriously. And I'm sure they don't take 'Plus too seriously either.

**Gus Swan**  
Emap Images  
gus.swan@ecm.emap.com

## Fat chance

I WAS hoping you would use the Sold Out visuals we emailed you, not my 'statuesque' figure (Hidden Camera - MCV 11/9).

This just adds to my anorexia complex. I look in a mirror and I just see a fat person, yet I know deep down that I'm okay. I have a really fast metabolism.

**Garry Williams**  
Imagineer  
garry@imag.demon.co.uk

## We can't count

I DON'T WANT to be too anal about this, but you have said twice that next year's Star Wars movie is 'the first in 20 years' (Gorging on Lucas - MCV 18/9).

Star Wars came out in 1977, Empire Strikes Back in 1980 and Return of the Jedi in 1983. Where does the 20 years come from?

**Steve Owen**  
Permanent Inc.  
permanent.inc@usa.net



Want to say something? Write directly to the editor and get it off your chest. Simply email [sdinsey@aol.com](mailto:sdinsey@aol.com). Post address is MCV Media, Hampden House, Hitchin Road, Arlesey, Bedfordshire SG15 6RT.



YOUR KEY TO OUR WEEKLY PRODUCT GUIDE

What is an Order Tip?

A complete evaluation service for retailers. As a product goes into pre-sales, Order Tips will summarise every important aspect of the title's release, so that the product is fully understood by retailers and can therefore be more accurately ordered.

It is not MCV's intention to 'make' or 'break' a product. Nor do we attempt to 'review' the product in the same sense as the specialist press would.

Product Information

A summary of the game, including the game style, the number of players and the game's main features. We will also look at the title's overall quality - paying particular attention to the game's positive points, which would be most attractive to purchasers.

Reviews

Specialist press reviews, as provided by the product's publishers.

Marketing Support

A quick guide to the TV, radio, print, P.O.S. and other marketing muscle supporting the product.

Special Information

Indicates that MCV considers the product particularly suitable for in-store display.

15 The voluntary or BBFC rating, where known and relevant.

Indicates that the game has a license attached to it. The arrow points upwards if the license adds value at retail, down if not.

FP The letters FP indicates a full-price release. BC indicates a back-catalogue release.

Sales Potential

The game's likely performance once released. This section takes into account the game's genre, competition, pricepoint, marketing support, overall quality and press reviews.



Resident Evil Platinum

GENERAL INFORMATION

PlayStation

Genre: Action/adventure  
Developer: Capcom  
Publisher: Virgin  
Street date: October 16  
Estimated street price: £19.99

PRODUCT INFORMATION 1 player

The original zombie buster is exhumed to stumble onto the shelves as a budget release. This is the game that invented a genre (err, the Resident Evil rip-off genre) and, while it's not as polished or cinematic as the sequel, it is just as playable. A tougher title for those weaned on its successor.

REVIEWS

MARKETING SUPPORT

No specific campaign planned for Platinum arrival

SPECIAL INFORMATION

15 BC

SALES POTENTIAL

With the sequel still riding high in the charts, the original Resident Evil at its new pricepoint will be very tempting.



V2000

GENERAL INFORMATION

PlayStation

Genre: Action  
Developer: Frontier Developments  
Publisher: Grolier Interactive  
Street date: October 2  
Estimated street price: £39.99

PRODUCT INFORMATION 1 player

Virus is more challenging than the average PlayStation title. Besides the inherent complexity of playing with control pad, players must also master six different environments, each with its own characteristics like strong winds or scalding hot surfaces. Could perplex the mass-market punter.

REVIEWS 85% (Total), 8/10 (Edge)

MARKETING SUPPORT

P.O.S. A2 posters, sales sheets, rolling demos

Misc. Caps, shirts and stickers, sponsorship of magazine subs bags, demos

SPECIAL INFORMATION

FP

SALES POTENTIAL

Won't benefit from the buzz that surrounds David Braben among the more mature PC audience. And relatively speaking, it's unlikely to do as well.



R-Types

GENERAL INFORMATION

PlayStation

Genre: Shoot-em-up  
Developer: Irem  
Publisher: Virgin  
Street date: October 16  
Estimated street price: £39.99

PRODUCT INFORMATION 1 player

A pixel-perfect conversion of what has been described as the perfect shoot-em-up. Two games are included (the original R-Type and its follow-up) and while both are essentially old-fashioned 2D sideways scrolling blasts, they stand the test of time. Graphically simple, the games still boast a certain visual elegance, although the music has aged less gracefully.

REVIEWS 4/5 (C&VG) 8/10 (OPM)

MARKETING SUPPORT

Print Support includes DPS ads in Official PlayStation Magazine, PlayStation Power and PlayStation Plus

SPECIAL INFORMATION

FP

SALES POTENTIAL

R-Types has been cheered by the specialist press, but the newly recruited mass-market might find it too old-fashioned. On balance, it should do reasonable numbers on nostalgia alone.



Future Cop: LAPD

GENERAL INFORMATION

PlayStation

Genre: Action  
Developer: Electronic Arts  
Publisher: Electronic Arts  
Street date: October 2  
Estimated street price: £39.99

PRODUCT INFORMATION 1-2 players

Protected inside a robotic walker, players fight freak mutants for truth and justice in a futuristic Los Angeles. In short, another 3D shoot-em-up. The excellent two-player split-screen mode offers the chance to solve missions together or else compete in an arena, where they can create jets and tanks to pit against each other.

REVIEWS

MARKETING SUPPORT

Print Ads in games press, national papers and magazines

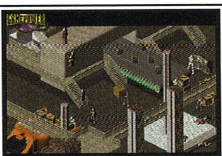
P.O.S. Sell sheets, posters and standees

SPECIAL INFORMATION

FP

SALES POTENTIAL

Future Cop: LAPD's novel two-player mode is its best selling point at retail. Should do healthy numbers.



X-Com: Apocalypse

GENERAL INFORMATION

PC

Genre: Strategy  
Developer: Mythos  
Publisher: MicroProse  
Street date: October 16  
Estimated street price: £12.99

PRODUCT INFORMATION 1 player

The final X-Com in the classic mould (the series went 3D for X-Com: Interceptor) Apocalypse is arguably the series' crowning glory. A turn-based struggle with alien invaders, it has strategy by the briefcase load, making titles such as Red Alert and Dungeon Keeper look like yob fodder. Mythos also developed Magic and Mayhem, published this month.

REVIEWS

MARKETING SUPPORT

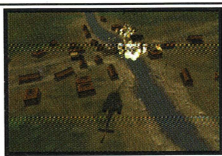
No specific campaign planned for budget re-appearance

SPECIAL INFORMATION

BC

SALES POTENTIAL

X-Com: Apocalypse is a fantastic game that will run on almost any current PC. It isn't going to storm the charts, but it will perform respectably over time.



MIA: Missing in Action

GENERAL INFORMATION

PC

Genre: Action  
Developer: Glass Ghost  
Publisher: GT Interactive  
Street date: October 2  
Estimated street price: £29.99

PRODUCT INFORMATION 1 player

Glass Ghost's take on EA's Desert/Jungle/Urban Strike family oozes atmosphere. Fighting in Vietnam, players rescue prisoners, escort troops and fight the red peril. The environments are more feature-heavy than its closest cousin, SCI's SWIV 3D, but its weapon upgrades are disappointing - due to its focus on realism, MIA reaches a plateau too soon.

MARKETING SUPPORT

Print Specialist and trade ads

P.O.S. In-store video, posters

SPECIAL INFORMATION

FP

SALES POTENTIAL

A lovely action game, with just enough real-life technology and historical basis to appeal to PC gamer's sensibilities.



Magic and Mayhem

GENERAL INFORMATION

PC

Genre: Strategy  
Developer: Mythos  
Publisher: Virgin  
Street date: October 16  
Estimated street price: £39.99

PRODUCT INFORMATION 1-4/network

Magic and Mayhem isn't easy to pigeonhole but the better for it. Crudely, it combines the feel of Diablo with the combat of C&C. Players assume the role of magicians, exploring magical realms and summoning creatures to fight their foes. As you'd expect from the developers of X-Com, players will have to think strategically, with tough AI increasing the challenge.

REVIEWS 90% (Ultimate PC)

MARKETING SUPPORT

Print Five month campaign in specialist and lifestyle press

P.O.S. Standees

SPECIAL INFORMATION

FP

SALES POTENTIAL

Probably not the next Commandos: Behind Enemy Lines, but a good title with excellent prospects amongst the more committed PC gaming community.



Knights and Merchants

GENERAL INFORMATION

PC

Genre: Strategy  
Developer: Joymania Ent.  
Publisher: Interactive Magic  
Street date: October 23  
Estimated street price: £39.99

PRODUCT INFORMATION 1/network

Like Interactive Magic's completely unrelated Seven Kingdom's product, this is another medieval strategy game, but rather more C&C than Warcraft II. It has some nice features of its own too, including the predefined troop formations that were so sorely missed in Microsoft's Age of Empires and quite a detailed economic model.

REVIEWS

MARKETING SUPPORT

Print PC Gamer, PC Format, PC Zone and Ultimate PC

P.O.S. A4 colour flyers

Misc. Directly mail and cover-mounted demo CDs

SPECIAL INFORMATION

FP

SALES POTENTIAL

Not a stellar release, but Knights and Merchants might tempt punters who can't wait for Microsoft's Age of Empires II.



V2000

GENERAL INFORMATION

PC

Genre: Action  
Developer: Frontier Developments  
Publisher: Grolier Interactive  
Street date: October 2  
Estimated street price: £39.99

PRODUCT INFORMATION 1/network

Most famous for the 8-bit title Elite, David Braben revives his other legendary shoot-em-up, the Acorn Archimedes hit Virus. Players strive to halt a deadly alien virus. The original was one of the first action games to exploit the mouse. V2000 isn't half as hard to control as its predecessor, but it still demands an unusual degree of dexterity and quick thinking.

REVIEWS 90% (Zone), 88% (PCF)

MARKETING SUPPORT

P.O.S. A2 posters, sales sheets, rolling demos

Misc. Caps, shirts and stickers, sponsorship of magazine subs bags, demos

SPECIAL INFORMATION

FP

SALES POTENTIAL

A good title that might just tempt gamers away from the seemingly endless stream of Quake clones.



Buggy

GENERAL INFORMATION

PC

Genre: Driving  
Developer: Gremlin Interactive  
Publisher: Gremlin Interactive  
Street date: October 7  
Estimated street price: £39.99

PRODUCT INFORMATION 1-2 players

Buggy tries to offer something different to Monaco Grand Prix, Colin McRae Rally and the other PC driving games hitting retail. Swapping the starting grid and pit lanes for remote controlled cars leads to a slightly more erratic, jerky driving experience, but it doesn't exploit the potential of little cars as well as, say, Micro Machines or Acclaim's upcoming ReVolt.

REVIEWS

MARKETING SUPPORT

TV 'Buggy' challenge with RAD (Channel 5)

Print Specialist and non-specialist press

P.O.S. A2 posters and window stickers

Misc. Fly-posting and cross-promotion with Mattel

SPECIAL INFORMATION

FP

SALES POTENTIAL

Buggy doesn't quite take its theme far enough to bring something radically different to the marketplace. And toy cars won't wow the serious minded PC gaming community.



# Hitting the street

Retail's favourite guide to software release information and distributor contacts...

TITLE	FORMAT	GENRE	PUBLISHER	TELEPHONE	DISTRIBUTOR	RELEASE DATE	DEVELOPER
Wild 9	PSX	Action	Interplay	01628 423666	Centresoft	October 2nd	Shiny
5th Element	PC	Ubi Soft	Activision	0181 944 9000	Pinnacle	October 2nd	Kalisto
Essential Elements	PC	Compilation	Activision	01895 456700	Centresoft	October 2nd	Activision
ISS Pro '98	PSX	Football	Konami	01703 653377	Open	October 2nd	Konami
Monaco Grand Prix	PC	Racing	Ubi Soft	0181 944 9000	Pinnacle	October 2nd	Ubi Soft
Croc Platinum	PSX	3D Platform	EA	01753 549442	Pinnacle	October 2nd	Argonaut
Grand Prix Legends	PC	Racing	Cendant	0118 920 9100	Gauntlet	October 2nd	Papyrus
Barrage	PC	Action/Driving	Activision	01895 456700	Centresoft	October 2nd	Activision
Zork Adventure Trilogy	PC	Adventure	Activision	01895 456700	Centresoft	October 2nd	Activision
Nascar '99	PSX	Racing	EA	01753 549442	Pinnacle	October 2nd	EA San Mateo, USA
All Star Tennis '99	N64	Sports	Ubisoft	0181 944 9000	Pinnacle	October 2nd	Smart Dog
Need for Speed III	PC	Racing	EA	01753 549442	Pinnacle	October 2nd	EA San Mateo, USA
Isreali Air Combat	PC	Sim	EA	01753 549 442	Pinnacle	October 2nd	EA San Mateo,USA
Future Cop LAPD 2100	PSX	Action	EA	01753 549 442	Pinnacle	October 2nd	EA San Mateo,USA
NFL Blitz	PC/PSX/N64	Sports	GT Interactive	0171 258 3791	Open	October 2nd	Midway
V2000	PC	Action	Grolier	01865 264 800	Open	October 2nd	Frontier
Small Soldiers	GB	Action	THQ	01372 745 222	Open	October 2nd	Tiertex
Cool Hand	GB	Action	Take 2	01753 854 444	Centresoft	October 2nd	Tarantula Studios
Reservoir Rat	GB	Action	Take 2	01753 854 444	Centresoft	October 2nd	Tarantula Studios
NHL '99	PSX/PC	Sports	EA	01753 549442	Pinnacle	October 2nd	EA Canada
Small Soldiers	PC	Action	Hasbro	0171 490 1323	Centresoft	October 2nd	Dreamworks Int.
Montezuma's Return	PC/GB	Action	Take 2	01753 854 444	Centresoft	October 2nd	Utopia
Disney's Mulan	PC/Mac	Adventure/Puzz	Disney	0181 222 1000	Open	October 5th	Disney
Buggy	PC/PSX	Racing	Gremlin	0114 263 9900	Open	October 6th	Gremlin
X-Men Vs. Street Fighter	PSX	Fighting	VIE	0171 368 2255	Centresoft	October 9th	Capcom
QfG 5: Dragon Fire	PC	Adventure	Cendant	0118 920 9100	Gauntlet	October 9th	Sierra
Nightlong	PC	Action	Microprose	01454 893 893	Pinnacle	October 9th	Microprose/Team17
Rainbow Six	PC	Action	Take 2	01753 854 444	Centresoft	October 9th	Redstorm
Sierra Sports: Football '99	PC	Sports	Cendant	0118 920 9100	Gauntlet	October 13th	Sierra
Resident Evil Platinum	PSX	Action	VIE	0171 368 2255	Centresoft	October 16th	Capcom
Rushdown	PC/PSX	Action/Strat	Infogrames	0161 832 6633	Centresoft	October 16th	Canal + Multimedia
Magic & Mayhem	PC	Strategy	VIE	0171 368 2255	Centresoft	October 16th	Mythos Games
Half-Life	PC	Action	Cendant	0118 920 9100	Gauntlet	October 16th	Valve Software
Constructor	PSX	Strategy	Acclaim	0171 344 5000	Open	October 16th	Acclaim
R-Types	PSX	Arcade	VIE	0171 368 2255	Centresoft	October 16th	Capcom
3D Ultra Pinball 3 (S.O)	PC	Arcade	Cendant	0118 920 9100	Gauntlet	October 16th	Sierra
Phantasmagoria 2 (S.O)	PC	Adventure	Cendant	0118 920 9100	Gauntlet	October 16th	Sierra
Casino Deluxe(S.O)	PC	Family Games	Cendant	0118 920 9100	Gauntlet	October 16th	Sierra
Madden NFL '99	PC/N64	Sports	EA	01753 549442	Pinnacle	October 16th	EA San Mateo, USA
Xcom Apocalypse	PC	Strategy	Microprose	01454 893 893	Pinnacle	October 16th	Mythos Games
C3 Racing	PSX	Racing	Infogrames	0161 832 6633	Centresoft	October 16th	Eutechnyx
Victory Boxing 2	PSX	Fighting	VIE	0171 368 2255	Centresoft	October 16th	JVC
Game of Life	PC	Board	Hasbro	0171 490 1323	Centresoft	October 16th	Hasbro
Starcraft Expansion Pack	PC	Add on	Cendant	0118 920 9100	Gauntlet	October 16th	Blizzard
Brian Lara Cricket	PC/PSX	Sports	Codemasters	01926 814 132	Open	October (Mid)	Codemasters
Bombberman Hero	Nintendo	Action	Nintendo	01703 653377	THE Games	October (Mid)	Hudsonsoft
1080 Snowboarding	N64	Racing	Nintendo	01703 653377	THE Games	October (Mid)	Nintendo

DISTRIBUTOR	ADDRESS	WHOLESALE CONTACTS	TELEPHONE	FAX
Aashima Distribution	Waterside Bus. Park, Eastways, Whittam, Essex, CM8 3YQ		01376 500 770	01376 518 780
Alternative Software Ltd	5-7 Bailey Gate Industrial Estate, Pontefract, West Yorkshire, WF8 2LN		01977 797777	01977 790243
Bizarre Love Triangle	2 The Courtyard, Denmark St., Wokingham, Berks, RG40 2AZ		0118 9787443	0118 9787448
Budget UK	150 Chorley Old Road, Bolton, BL1 3AT		01204 846301	01204 492595
CD Rom Distribution	Mowbray House, Mowbray St, Stockport, Cheshire, SK1 3EJ		0161 4774235	0161 477 5687
CD Wholesale	18 Wharside, Nenny,Stratford, Milton Keynes, MK2 2AZ		01908 371672	01908 371680
Centresoft	Units 4&5, Holford Way, Holford, Birmingham B6 7AX		0121 625 7106	0121 344 4443
Computer Bookshops	205 Foremans Road, Spark Hill, Birmingham, B11 3AX		0121 778 3333	0121 606 0469
Computer Cave	Unit 20, Mandervell Road, Oadby, LE2 5LQ		01162 711911	01162 711597
Computer Warehouse	1 Amalgamated Drive, West Cross Center, Great West Road, Brentford, TW8 9EZ		0181 400 1234	0181 400 9444
Entertainment UK	243 Blyth Road, Hayes, Middx, UB3 1DN		0181 8487511	0181 573 5227
Fire International	NACAP House, 46-48 Silver St, Doncaster, DN1 1HT		01302 325225	01302 322 061
Gauntlet Entertainment	Talon House, Presley Way, Crownhill, Milton Keynes, MK8 0EE		01908 575600	01908 564587
Gem Distribution Ltd	Lovett Road, The Pinnacles, Harlow, Essex, CM19 5TB		01279 822 822	01279 412604
Golding Products	Unit 24, Hortonwood 33, Telford, TF1 4EX		01952 606667	01952 670267
Guildsoft	The Software Centre, East Way, Lee Mill Ind. Estate, Ivy Bridge, Devon, PL19 GPE		01752 895100	01752 894833
Ingram Micro (UK) Ltd	Garamondc Drive, Wymbush, Milton Keynes, Bucks, MK8 8DF		01908 260422	01908 265526
Interactive Ideas	Unit 2, Centenary Estate, Centenary Road, Enfield, Middx, EN3 7UF		0181 805 1000	0181 805 8962
Koch Media Ltd	Hamps. Int. Business Park, Crockford Lane, Chineham, Basingstoke, Hampshire, RG24 8WH		01256 707767	01256 707377
Lazer Distribution	Unit 2, Kingsgate Business Unit, Heathpark Ind. Estate, Honiton, Devon, EX14 8YD		01404 46660	01404 46661
LDA Distribution	12 Firbank Way, Chartwell Bus. Park, Leighton Buzzard, LU7 8FL		01525 852900	01525 854358
Lightwave	Unit 18, Wirral Bus. Center, Dock Road, Birkenhead, L41 1JW		0151 6305003	0151 630 6237
Micro Peripherals	1 Linden Wood, Chineham, Basingstoke, Hampshire, RG24 8QY		01256 707070	01256 707505
Peanut Distribution	33-36 Singleton St., Swansea, SA9 3QW		01792 462262	01792 461664
Pinnacle	The Teardrop Centre, London Road, Swanley, Kent BR8 8TS		01322 665652	01322 619259
Planet Distribution	170 Brooker Road, Waltham Abbey, Essex, EN9 1JH		01992 707 400	01992 707 401
Playware	23a High Street, Rushden, Northants, NN10 0QE		019033 396596	01933 396597
Prism Leisure	Unit 1, Baird Road, Enfield, Middx, EN1 1SJ		0181 804 8100	0181 805 8001
Quicksilver	Unit 5-7 Baileygate Ind. Estate, Pontifract, W.Yorkshire, WF8 2LN		01977 600888	01977 790243
RSD Connections	Mead Business Centre, Mead Lane, Hertford, SG13 7AG		01992 584205	01992 584207
SJB Disks Ltd	Jubilee Drive, Loughborough, Leicestershire, LE11 5TY		01509 610333	01509 610235
T.H.E Games	Parham Drive, Boyatt Wood, Eastleigh, Hampshire SO50 4NU		0990 000064	0990 006644
T.H.E	Rosevale Business Park, Newcastle Under Lyme, Staffordshire ST5 7QT		01782 566511	01782 565400
Telegames	Kilby Bridge, Wigston, Leicester, LE18 3TE		01162 880445	0116 2813437
Telstar Distribution	Units 3-4, Northgate Bus. Centre, Crown Road, Enfield, Middx, EN1 1TG		0181 805 7788	0181 805 9210
Videogames	25 Cromwell Court, Ealing Road, Alperton, Middx, HA0 1JT		0181 998 6555	0181 998 5491
XMA Ltd	Willford Ind. Estate, Ruddington Lane, Nottingham, NG11 7EP		0115 981 8222	0115 981 0180

A to Z	
1080 Snowboarding	October (Mid)
3D Ultra Pinball 3 (S.O)	October 16th
5th Element	October 2nd
All Star Tennis '99	October 2nd
Barrage	October 2nd
Baseball 2000	October (Mid)
Brian Lara Cricket	October (Mid)
Buggy	October 6th
C3 Racing	October 16th
Caesar 3	October 2nd
Caesers World Gambling	October (Mid)
Casino Deluxe(S.O)	October 16th
Constructor	October 16th
Cool Hand	October 2nd
Croc Platinum	October 2nd
Disney's Mulan	October 5th
Essential Elements	October 2nd
Future Cop LAPD 2100	October 2nd
Game of Life	October 16th
Grand Prix Legends	October 2nd
Isreali Air Combat	October 2nd
ISS Pro '98	October 2nd
Madden NFL '99	October 16th
Magic & Mayhem	October 16th
Magic the Gathering	October (Mid)
Monaco Grand Prix	October 2nd
Montezuma's Return	October 2nd
Nascar '99	October 2nd
Need for Speed III	October 2nd
NFL Blitz	October 2nd
NHL '99	October 2nd
Nightlong	October 9th
Phantasmagoria 2 (S.O)	October 16th
QfG 5: Dragon Fire	October 9th
Rainbow Six	October 9th
Reservoir Rat	October 2nd
Resident Evil Platinum	October 16th
R-Types	October 16th
Rushdown	October 16th
Sierra Sports: Football '99	October 13th
Small Soldiers	October 2nd
V2000	October 2nd
Victory Boxing 2	October 16th
Wild 9	October 2nd
Xcom Apocalypse: Powerplus	October 16th
X-Men Vs. Street Fighter	October 9th

Website Guide	
Aashima Distribution	www.Trust-site.com
CD-Rom Distribution	www.cdromd.com
Centresoft	www.centresoft.co.uk
Computer 2000	www.computer2000.co.uk
Computer Cave	www.users.globalnet.co.uk/~ccave/
Enta Technologies	www.enta.co.uk
Fairline Distribution	www.fairline.com
Fire International	www.blaze.de
First Choice Components	www.fccmemory.com
Future Console Design	www.x-plorer.co.uk
Gem Distribution	www.gem.co.uk
Guildsoft	www.guildsoft.co.uk
Ingram Micro	www.ingrammicro.co.uk
Interact Accessories	www.interact-acc.com
Keyboard Company	www.keyboardco.co.uk
Koch Media	www.kochmedia.co.uk
Lazer Distribution	www.lazer.co.uk
LDA Distribution	www.lda.uk.com
Lightwave	computer-cables.com
Matsuri UK	www.matsuriuk.demon.co.uk
Microteq Innovations	microteq.com/microteq
Peanut Distribution	www.mmexp.co.uk
Principal Distribution	www.principal.co.uk
Spectravideo	www.spectravideo.com
THE Games	www.the.co.uk
XMA	www.unet.com/xma



# TOP 40

## GAMES CHART

Every week MCV will bring you an at-a-glance guide to the UK market's top-selling titles, courtesy of ChartTrack and ELSPA

LAST WEEK	THIS WEEK	TITLE	LABEL	FORMAT
1	1	TEKKEN 3	NAMCO/SONY	PLAYSTATION
2	2	F1 WORLD GRAND PRIX	NINTENDO	N64
NEW	3	MISSION: IMPOSSIBLE	OCEAN/INFOGRADES	N64
3	4	TOCA TOURING CAR	CODEMASTERS	PLAYSTATION, PC
9	5	WWF: WARZONE	ACCLAIM	PL, N64, GA
4	6	COLIN MCRAE RALLY	CODEMASTERS	PLAYSTATION
NEW	7	C&C RETALIATION	WESTWOOD STUDIOS	PLAYSTATION
6	8	TOMB RAIDER 2	EIDOS INTERACTIVE	PLAYSTATION, PC
5	9	PREMIER MANAGER '98	GREMLIN	PLAYSTATION, PC
16	10	V RALLY	INFOGRADES	PLAYSTATION, GA
7	11	GRAN TURISMO	SCEE	PLAYSTATION
8	12	WORLD CUP '98	EA/THQ	PL, PC, N64, GA
10	13	TOMB RAIDER	EIDOS INTERACTIVE	PL, SA, PC
RE	14	ODD WORLD: ABE'S ODDYSEE	ODDWORLD INHABITANTS	PLAYSTATION, PC
13	15	CRASH BANDICOOT	SCEE	PLAYSTATION
15	16	RESIDENT EVIL 2	VIRGIN	PLAYSTATION
18	17	DIE HARD TRILOGY	EA/FOX INTERACTIVE	PL, PC, SA
11	18	BANJO KAZOOIE	NINTENDO	N64
17	19	TEKKEN 2	SCEE	PLAYSTATION
NEW	20	MORTAL KOMBAT 4	GT/WILLIAMS	PLAYSTATION, N64
14	21	COMMANDOS	EIDOS INTERACTIVE	PC
12	22	ISS '98	KONAMI	N64
19	23	GRAND THEFT AUTO	TAKE 2 INTERACTIVE	PC, PLAYSTATION
21	24	FIA FORMULA 1	PSYGNOSIS	PLAYSTATION, PC
20	25	RAYMAN	UBI SOFT	PC, PLAYSTATION
27	26	FORMULA 1 '97	PSYGNOSIS	PC, PLAYSTATION
NEW	27	QUAKE II: GROUND ZERO	ACTIVISION	PC
24	28	THEME PARK	EA/BULLFROG	PC, PL, AG
26	29	SPICE WORLD	SCEE	PLAYSTATION
RE	30	ENCARTA '98 SUITE	MICROSOFT	PC
25	31	MICRO MACHINES V3	CODEMASTERS	PC, PLAYSTATION
22	32	C&C RED ALERT	VIRGIN INTERACTIVE	PC, PLAYSTATION
RE	33	THEME HOSPITAL	ELECTRONIC ARTS	PC, PLAYSTATION
29	34	CROC	EA/FOX INTERACTIVE	PLAYSTATION, PC, SA
23	35	POINT BLANK	SCEE/NAMCO	PLAYSTATION
31	36	WORMS	OCEAN/TEAM 17	PL, GA, SA, MD
28	37	ACTUA GOLF 2	GREMLIN INTERACTIVE	PC, PLAYSTATION
30	38	TR: UNFINISHED BUSINESS	EIDOS INTERACTIVE	PC
NEW	39	CREATURES 2	MINDSCAPE	PC
35	40	TITANIC	EUROPRESS	PC

### Market Breakdown

THE MARKET'S PERFORMANCE FOR THE WEEK ENDING SEPTEMBER 26TH

MARKET BY UNITS	WEEKLY % CHANGE	MARKET SHARE
Total Market	Up 11%	-
Full Price Console	Up 24%	35%
Full Price Home Computer	Up 3%	30%
Budget Console	Up 7%	19%
Budget Home Computer	No Change	16%

MARKET BY VALUE	WEEKLY % CHANGE	MARKET SHARE
Total Market	Up 13%	-
Full Price Console	Up 23%	47%
Full Price Home Computer	Up 4%	35%
Budget Console	Up 12%	12%
Budget Home Computer	Up 2%	6%

#### Nintendo 64

1	F1 WORLD GRAND PRIX
2	MISSION: IMPOSSIBLE
3	BANJO-KAZOOIE
4	WWF: WARZONE
5	ISS '98
6	MORTAL KOMBAT 4
7	GOLDENEYE 007
8	MARIO KART 64
9	WAIALAE GOLF CLASSICS
10	DIDDY KONG RACING
11	SUPER MARIO 64
12	LYLAT WARS
13	YOSHI'S STORY 64
14	WORLD CUP '98
15	WAVERACE
16	SHADOWS OF THE EMPIRE
17	EXTREME G
18	GT 64
19	SNOWBOARD KIDS
20	ISS 64

#### PC

1	COMMANDOS
2	QUAKE II: GROUND ZERO
3	ENCARTA '98 SUITE
4	PREMIER MANAGER '98
5	CREATURES 2
6	TITANIC
7	WORLD CUP '98
8	X-FILES: THE GAME
9	C&C: RED ALERT
10	CHAMP. MANAGER '97/'98
11	AGE OF EMPIRES
12	TOTAL AIR WAR
13	UNREAL
14	QUAKE 2
15	CIVILIZATION 2
16	TOMB RAIDER 2
17	GRAND THEFT AUTO
18	WORMS 2
19	MS FLIGHT SIM '98
20	MYST

#### PlayStation

1	TEKKEN 3
2	TOCA TOURING CAR
3	COLIN MCRAE RALLY
4	C&C RETALIATION
5	GRAN TURISMO
6	V RALLY
7	TOMB RAIDER 2
8	TOMB RAIDER
9	CRASH BANDICOOT
10	ODDWORLD
11	PREMIER MANAGER '98
12	WWF: WARZONE
13	RESIDENT EVIL 2
14	TEKKEN 2
15	DIE HARD TRILOGY
16	WORLD CUP '98
17	RAYMAN
18	FIA FORMULA 1
19	SPICEWORLD
20	POINT BLANK

#### Console

1	TEKKEN 3
2	F1 WORLD GRAND PRIX
3	MISSION: IMPOSSIBLE
4	WWF: WARZONE
5	COLIN MCRAE RALLY
6	C&C RETALIATION
7	GRAN TURISMO
8	TOMB RAIDER 2
9	WORLD CUP '98
10	PREMIER MANAGER '98
11	RESIDENT EVIL 2
12	BANJO-KAZOOIE
13	MORTAL KOMBAT 4
14	ISS '98
15	POINT BLANK
16	FORMULA 1 '97
17	GRAND THEFT AUTO
18	GOLDENEYE 007
19	MADDEN NFL '99
20	THE FIFTH ELEMENT



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## Core blimey!



Alright, so you're waiting for Tomb Raider 3. But in the meantime Eidos studio Core has been busying itself with Ninja.

The game has already picked up decent reviews from the monthlies, while a £250,000 UK marketing spend - including TV - will further build interest.

Core is offering 10 lucky readers the chance to pick up a free copy of the game.

Simply answer the following question and email the answer to [mcvnews@aol.com](mailto:mcvnews@aol.com), including your contact details.

**Which publisher is handling the release of Core's Ninja?**

## Hidden Camera



BT Wireplay's marketing man Chris Knight has a message for anyone who disses online gaming. Nice to know that the telephone giant is as good at dealing with complaints as ever.

## Sitewatch



### Rareware

[www.rareware.com](http://www.rareware.com)

It turns out that the people at Rare aren't publicity shy - they just want to control the beast.

So although occasional press visits to the firm's development fortress remain just that, more info can be gleaned here.

Don't expect to read of staff defections, the lack of N64 software or the direct telephone numbers of star programmers. But do expect shots of Perfect Dark and Jet Force Gemini before they reach the monthlies.

**Rating 3/5**

Wish you knew more about the business? Bluffer's Guide is here to help. This week we feature one of the industry's oldest and most embarrassing problems...

# Bluffer's Guide

## No.5 Slippage...

**Sounds vile...**

It can be pretty messy, certainly.

**Common problem?**

Common, timeless, endless...

**So what is it?**

It's the bane of the industry. More acutely, it's the bane of retail. It's products not coming out when they're supposed to come out.

**Hardly a major crime, a few days here and there.**

Try several months, sometimes years - and absolutely bloody everywhere.

**Years?**

Too right. Heart of Darkness, for instance, was originally due from Virgin in 1996 and eventually ended up getting released by Infogrames a couple of months ago. Dungeon Keeper and Mission Impossible were also delayed by over a year.

**Who's to blame?**

Off the record, publishers moan about unprofessional, workshy developers failing to appreciate the commercial demands of the real world and subsequently missing deadlines.

Developers, usually on the record, moan about self-important suits failing to understand the creative process and subsequently imposing completely unrealistic deadlines.

Billy Punter, meanwhile, is left

to simply moan and moan to poor old Johnny Retailer that the game he read about in Total Station Power Play 15 months ago still isn't out yet.

**Surely other creative industries suffer the same problems: music, movies?**

Not really. It's not that everyone knows the exact day on which the Gallaghers will stop twatting each other long enough to finish the fourth Oasis album, it's just that Creation records haven't been hawking demos to assorted journalists and placing advertising in the NME, Q and Smash Hits for the past six months.

**But if it's such a perennial problem, why get worked up about it now?**

Because now, sadly, is about the time when publishers start to hint that, well, you know that game they said was gonna be the biggest of the year, the one that was going to save Christmas and the one that they've been previewing and advertising since February, whipping consumers up into a frenzy of quite vulgar anticipation? Well, it's not coming out until next year.

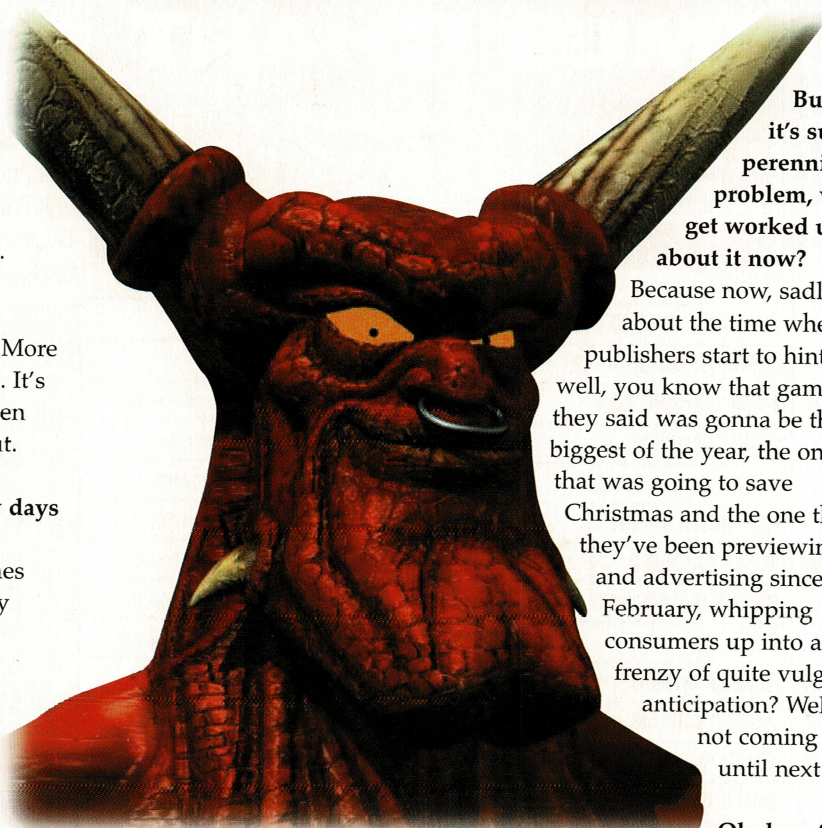
**Oh dear. So what games**

**have slipped so much that they might even miss Christmas?**

Tiberian Sun probably, Zelda on N64 possibly, Earthworm Jim 3D and Dungeon Keeper 2. Metal Gear Solid was never going to make it, but should have.

**Okay, I'm going to ask this just once and I want you to answer me quickly and clearly. No hesitation, no ambiguity. Is Tomb Raider 3 going to arrive before Santa does?**

Of course it is. If it slipped the developers would have to explain why not to Charles Cornwall. Even Liam and Noel wouldn't piss him about.



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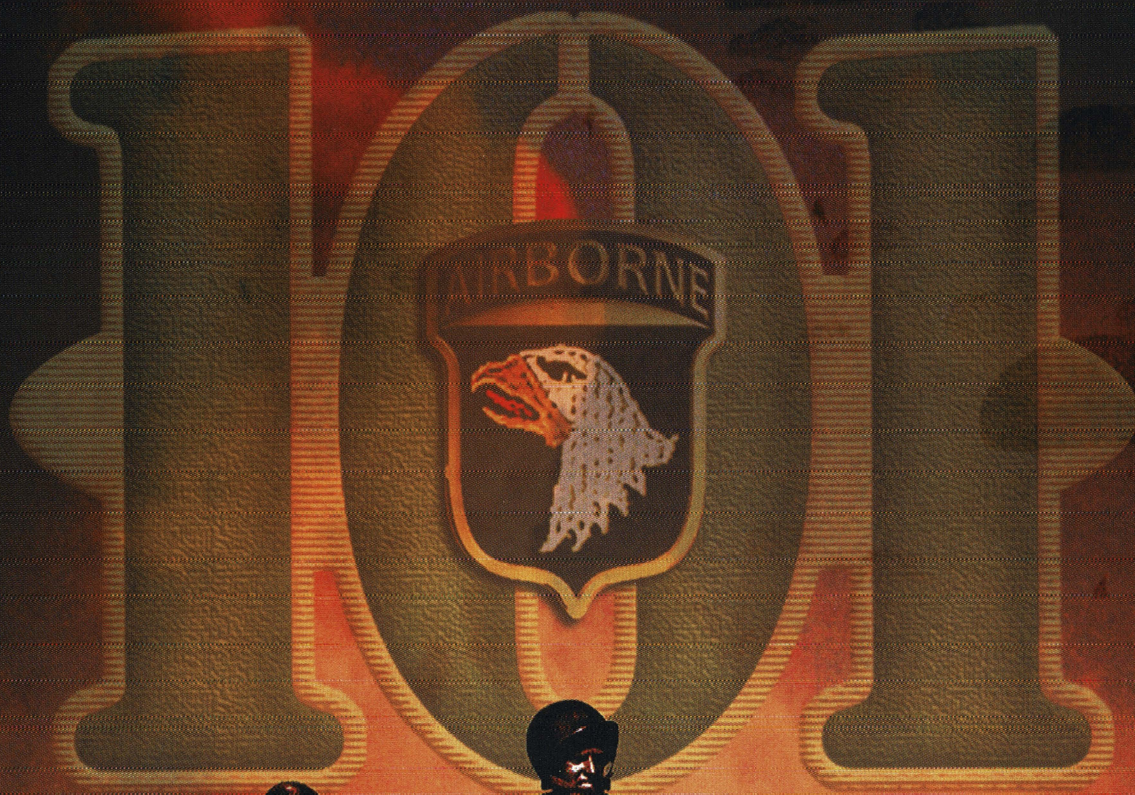
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# 101 GOOD REASONS TO STOCK **EMPIRE GAMES**



With 50 years worth of hindsight, are you ready to follow in the footsteps of the 101st Airborne? Lead a squad of 18 paratroopers behind enemy lines in this strategy-based simulation of squad level combat based on

the D-Day landings in Normandy. Controlling everything from attacks on the enemy to finding your next meal, **101: The 101st Airborne in Normandy** is thinking man's skirmish combat.

**PRODUCT FEATURES** Dynamic campaigning structure ensures the player's actions affect the next mission 4 players multi-play via modem, LAN or internet  
Up to 21 missions in any one campaign, giving hours of game time  
Initiative based phase action combines the details of turn-based gaming with the action of real-time movement

**ADVERTISING** Extensive advertising in Specialist Press magazines

**DIRECT MAIL** Targeted mail shot to 15,000 strategy gamers in order to increase traffic into retail

**ON-PACK PROMOTION** A voucher for 2 free Odeon Cinema tickets inside every copy

**POS** A4 flyers, A2 posters

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